



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

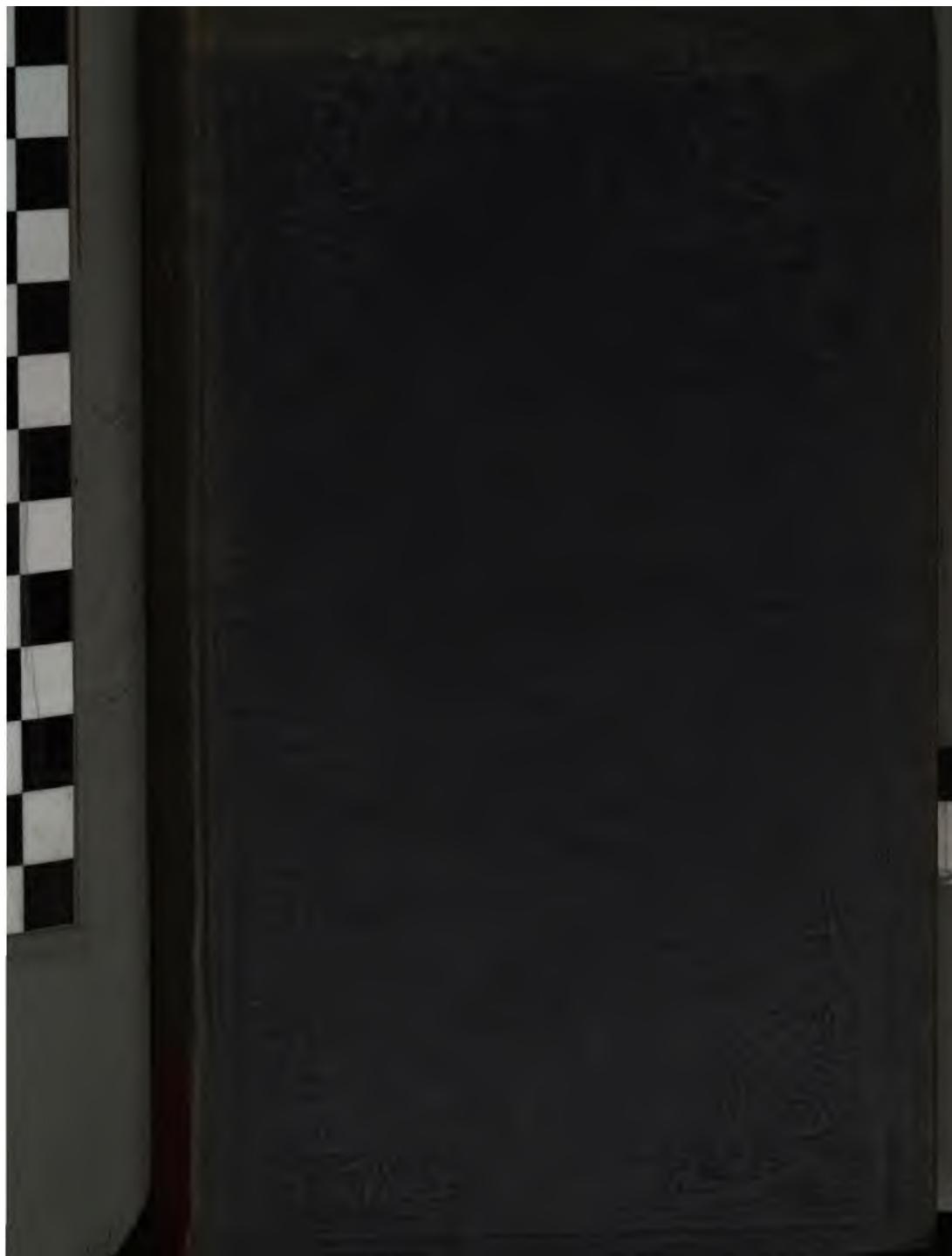
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600023803M

REMAINS
OF THE
HONOURABLE AND REVEREND
SOMERVILLE HAY, A.M.,
SOMETIME VICAR OF NETHERBURY AND BEAMINSTER,
IN DORSETSHIRE.
COMPRISING SERMONS, TRACTS, AND LETTERS.
WITH
AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR,
BY THOMAS J. GRAHAM, M.D.

“ Before honour is humility.”—Prov. xv. 33.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., STATIONERS’
COURT, AND J. HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY.

PRICE SIX SHILLINGS.

1854.

210. L. 212.

* * If any profits arise from this publication, part of them will be devoted to the relief of the Widows and Orphans of our Soldiers and Sailors recently fallen in battle.



J. DAVY and SONS, Printers, 137, Long Acre, London.

TO THE
HON^{BLE}. FRANCES ELIZTH. G. CALTHORPE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

KNOWING you to be a sincere admirer of the character of him, whose lovely disposition is pourtrayed, however feebly, in the following pages; permit me the gratification of inscribing these sheets to you, in token of the sense I entertain of your great and invariable kindness, and your Christian indulgence to myself, through a long series of years. That those streams of richest mercy which were so evidently vouchsafed to Mr. SOMERVILLE HAY, may likewise be your own portion now and for ever, is the sincere desire and prayer of

Your affectionate

And much obliged friend,

THE EDITOR.



P R E F A C E.

It is expedient to remark that some of the letters introduced into the following Memoir did not reach the Editor until a considerable portion of the other MSS. had been sent to press; otherwise the arrangement of the series would have been different.

We regret also that in noticing the family of Lady Alicia Hay, we overlooked, till it was too late for insertion in its proper place, one of the most distinguished of all its members; and since this gentleman shone as brightly in private as in public life, we are reluctant that the volume should be published without some notice of him. This was the Hon. Henry Erskine, the father of the present Earl of Buchan, and grandfather of Lady Alicia Hay. He was Lord-Advocate in Scotland during the administrations of Lord Rockingham and Mr. Fox; and was a person not only of the most transcendent talents, but of such uncommon virtues, that he was described, by one who knew his character well, as "a man to choose for a superior, to trust as a friend, and to love as a brother." It is a well-authenticated fact, that an attorney in a distant part of Scotland, representing to an oppressed and needy tacksman, who had applied to him for advice, the futility of entering into a lawsuit with a wealthy neighbour, having, himself, no means of

defending his cause, received for answer, "*Ye dinna ken what ye say, Maister, there's nae a puir man in Scotland need to want a friend, or fear an enemy, while Harry Erskine lives!*" A testimony to real worth, which outweighs in value all the crowns and coronets in the world.

The editor has availed himself of this opportunity to offer a few suggestions, and to publish some strictures upon subjects of the highest importance to mankind; and if it should be thought that in doing so, he has occasionally transgressed the bounds prescribed to a biographer, he must cast himself upon the kind indulgence of the reader, on the ground that such remarks have been prompted solely by a desire to excite greater attention to the character and moral government of God,—and to vindicate the absolute authority and supremacy of the Holy Scriptures, and that they are in perfect accordance with the sentiments of the subject of the memoir. The devil has stationed his camp behind the ramparts of modern *philosophy* and modern *theology*, and strives from thence to inflict the most wicked and deadly blows on the revealed truth of God. The father of lies, the dragon of the bottomless pit, the destroyer of souls, struggles through the tongues and pens of country clergymen, and professors, and ecclesiastical dignitaries, to convey subtle poison into human hearts; and we cannot feel easy to allow this opportunity of sounding our unprofessional note of alarm to pass by unimproved.

Epsem, Dec. 1854.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Preface	v
Introduction—containing a brief Memoir of Mr. HAY, viz.—	
CHAPTER I.	
His birth and family—education—ordination—appointed curate at Bergh Upton and South Lynn	ix
CHAPTER II.	
Marriage—Death of Lords Buchan and Ducie—leaves South Lynn—Appointed to the vicarage of Netherbury with Beaminster—Serious illness and sojourn at Ventnor—Effects a separation of Netherbury from Beaminster—His labours there affectionately testified to by his curate and many parishioners	xiii
CHAPTER III.	
The simplicity, humility, and modesty of his character—Deadness to the world—Chaplaincy of the Lock—Fondness of retirement and rural scenes—Sentiments on extempore preaching—Self-renunciation	xxi
CHAPTER IV.	
His opinions on the primary fundamental doctrine of man's depravity, and the absolute necessity of a new creation, in order to real virtue here and felicity hereafter—Baptismal Regeneration unscriptural—The unchangeableness of God's love—The sovereignty of God	xxxvii
CHAPTER V.	
His opinions of modern theological writers and preachers—Opposition to all speculative and semi-popish theology—Necessity of self-abasement and mortification of natural habits—Admiration of Love's Sermons and Letters—Boston's and Fraser's diary and experience—Irving's heresy—Danger of mystifying the doctrines of Scripture, among evangelical ministers—Authors and promulgators of pernicious and blasphemous conceits, condemned by him as without hope—Coleridge—Letters—Manchester Education Bill	liv
CHAPTER VI.	
Opens a large church at Lynn—His habitual preparation for death—Unwillingness of Christians to die—His last days	lxxxiii

SERMONS.		Page
1.	Remember Lot's Wife	1
2.	A great Profession without Godliness	10
3.	Ye cannot serve God and Mammon	19
4.	Christian hope always purifies	28
5.	The ungodly permitted, and used as means of discipline to the Righteous	37
6.	Christ Crucified the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God	48
7.	The work of Grace never fails	57
8.	The Mark of God's children	66
9.	Rejoicing the privilege, moderation the duty of all Believers	77
10.	Christ came to save and does save Sinners	85
11.	Judas a warning to all Professors	97
12.	The necessity and advantages of Self-Examination	107
13.	The Call of Abraham	117
14.	The Fall of Adam	127
15.	The immense Profit of Godliness	137
16.	The Character and Preservation of Lot, and the Destruction of Sodom	146
17.	No past Experience teaches the World Wisdom	156
18.	The Secret of Success in Preaching the Gospel	166
19.	The exclusive Object of Divine Regard	178
20.	Jesus Christ our Advocate with God	187
21.	The Physician who cures the Plagues of the Heart	197
TRACTS.		
No. 1.	The Disease and Cure of Souls	207
No. 2.	The Way to Heaven	217

 ERRATA.

Page xxxviii, eleventh line from bottom, for *insusceptible*, read *unsusceptible*

Page lxxix, first line, for *along*, read *along-standing*.

Page 59, twelfth line from top, strike out *any*.

INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING

REMINISCENCES OF MR. HAY'S LIFE AND
CHARACTER.

CHAPTER I.

1817—1840.

His birth and family—education—ordination—appointed
Curate at Bergh Upton and South Lynn.

God's never failing providence orders all things in heaven and earth. He puts down one and setteth up another. To some he gives largely, to others scantily, as it pleaseth him. Some are strong and long-lived; others delicate and short-lived. Some live in honour all their days; others drag out their painful existence in obscurity and contempt. Some families are conspicuous for their intellect and worldly prosperity, and for nothing higher and better; others are distinguished for their relish of spiritual things, for their holiness of life, their disinterestedness, their humility and piety. Some families are even favoured to drink of both the upper and the nether springs,—partaking not only of the rich temporal benefits of providence on earth, but likewise of the richer, lasting blessings of grace and heaven; a rare combination which never fails to elevate the devout mind in thankful adoration of God and his wonderful goodness.

The subject of this brief memoir was descended from one of the most ancient and most exalted families in Scotland,—the members of which, however, are the reverse of robust and long-lived. His father died at the early age of forty-seven,—his half-brother, the late

Earl of Errol, Master of the Buckhounds, at the age of forty-six,—and he himself at the still earlier period of thirty-seven. His course on earth was, indeed, short, but it was most distinguished, although not in a worldly sense; for he was favoured to bear away the double blessing, and to live in the world and pass out of it, the undoubted possessor, not only of the nobility granted by man, but likewise of that bestowed by God. He thus took rank among the noblest of the noble; as the chosen and sure possessor, not only of honours and graces that dignify the external man, although they so soon fade away, but also of those which adorn and purify the inward man, and which are imperishable.

The HON. and REV. SOMERVILLE HAY was the youngest son of the fifteenth Earl of Errol, and was born at his father's house at Lyndhurst, in the New Forest, on the 20th July, 1817. His mother was the Hon. Harriet Somerville, sister to Lord Somerville, a dignity of great antiquity.

The Earl of Errol is hereditary High Constable of Scotland, a creation by charter dated 12th Nov. 1315; and is, therefore, by birth, the first subject in the kingdom of Scotland after the blood royal; and, as such, has a right to take precedence of every other hereditary honour.

Burke says (Peerage of Great Britain)—

“The traditional origin of the noble house of Hay is thus related: In the reign of Kenneth the third, anno 980, the Danes, who had invaded Scotland, having prevailed at the battle of Luncarty, near Perth, were pursuing the flying Scots from the field, when a countryman, with his two sons, appeared in a narrow pass, through which the vanquished were hurrying, and impeded, for a moment, their flight. “What!” said the rustic, “had you rather be slaughtered by your merciless foe, than die honourably in the field? Come, rally, rally!” and he headed the fugitives, brandished his ploughshare, and crying out that help was at hand,—the Danes, believing that a fresh army was falling upon them, fled in confusion, and the Scots thus recovered the laurel which they had lost, and freed their country from servitude. The battle being won, the old man, afterwards known by the name of Hay, was brought to the king, who, assembling a parliament at

Scone, gave to the said Hay and his sons, as a just reward for their valour, so much land on the river Fay, in the district of Gowrie, as a falcon, from a man's hand, flew over, till it settled; which, being six miles in length, was afterwards called Errol; and the king being desirous to elevate Hay and his sons from their humble rank in life to the order of nobility, his majesty assigned them a coat of arms, which was, argent, three escutcheons, gules, to intimate that the father and two sons had been the three fortunate shields of Scotland. So much for tradition. But the incontrovertible fact is, that the noble houses of Tweeddale and Errol claim a common progenitor in William de Haye, who obtained a grant of the lands of Errol from William the Lion, and was king's butler in that monarch's reign. He espoused Juliana, daughter of Randolph de Loulis, Lord of Liddesdale, and had two sons, William his heir, and Robert, ancestor of the house of Tweeddale.*

Mr. Hay's father was appointed Knight-Marischal of Scotland in 1805, and in 1806 was chosen a representative peer. He was also for several years Lord High Commissioner to the Church of Scotland.

If amidst the many influences that operate on mankind,—to employ language partly borrowed from John Foster,—“the noblest of all is ordinarily countermined by all the rest, and an incalculable number of rational creatures are daily seen growing up and running the race of their brief existence,” under the conforming efficacy of what are mere matters of earth, transitory and confessedly unsatisfying—not to say demoralizing; if, “instead of courting the sacred energy of that Infinite Spirit,—that Great Reality,—which reigns everywhere,” and which is capable of subduing, purifying, and elevating the heart and mind of man; they are content that the thousand malignant forces ever in active hostility to our highest interests, and to our sweetest inward satisfactions, should stamp on them an image of earthliness and sensuality;—then

* William, ninth earl, who acted as High Constable of Scotland at the coronation of Charles the First,—on which occasion his horses were shod with silver,—lived in a manner so splendid, that he was obliged to dispose of his ancient paternal lordship of Errol, granted to his ancestors by king William the Lion, and the lands thereunto annexed.

the records, however brief, of the high life and aims of one who, in his days of manhood, felt, and spoke, and lived under the impression of an ever-present Deity, and in the conviction that fellowship and communion with Him is the great business and blessedness of life, cannot be otherwise than acceptable to virtuous and pious minds. Such was the life of the Hon. and Rev. Somerville Hay.

The history of our exterior life is not the main substance of it, although it is so in general account; but that substance is found in the history and merits of our internal principles—of our moral sentiments and affections—of our interior character—of the inner man. The dispositions and principles within determine the character; and although the actions without,—the exterior life, being their offspring, will ever substantially correspond with them, yet stirring incidents and extreme activity are not essential to true greatness. The materials for a memoir put into our hands are very scanty, and consequently we design merely to present to our readers some reminiscences,—a few lineaments of a modest retiring character of uncommon excellence and loveliness, gathered principally from personal observation and reflection in late years.

At the age of eight he was sent to Dr. Radcliffe's school at Salisbury, and from thence, at the age of fourteen, to Harrow. In 1833 he resided, for a time, with the Rev. W. Gedge, of North Buncton, (but now of King Edward's school, Birmingham), and in October, 1835, he was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge. After leaving Cambridge, he was ordained by the Bishop of Norwich, in July, 1840, being appointed Curate to the Hon. and Rev. J. Pelham, at Bergh Upton, Norfolk,—now of Hampstead Chapel. This he left for South Lynn, where he was appointed Curate, in December, 1841.

Of his earliest days we have not been able to collect any particulars worthy of notice. Those who knew him well testify to the uniform mildness and kindliness of his natural disposition, and his mother always found him most affectionate and obedient.

CHAPTER II.

1841—1849.

Marriage—Death of Lords Buchan and Ducie—Leaves South Lynn—appointed to the vicarage of Netherbury with Beaminster—serious illness and sojourn at Ventnor—effects a separation of Netherbury from Beaminster—his labours there affectionately testified to by one of his curates, and many parishioners.

IN June, 1843, Mr. Hay married the Lady Alicia Erskine, youngest daughter of the Earl of Buchan;—a lady belonging to a family, not only among the most ancient in Scotland, but one distinguished for genius and the most brilliant abilities.* Several members of the noble house of Buchan have been blessed with the cream of all God's mercies,—a heartfelt belief in his miraculous communications to sinful men, of the greatest, most certain and most momentous truths; which for ever ennoble the nature of those in whose hearts they find a sure depository. Lady Frances Gardiner, wife of Colonel James Gardiner, so illustrious in the annals both of his country and of the church, was Lady Alicia Hay's ancestor, and the tenth Earl of Buchan, who was her ladyship's great grandfather, was blessed with so happy a death at Bath in 1767, that Lady Huntingdon says it was "triumphant and glorious:"—

* Lord Chancellor Erskine, so celebrated for his talents and eloquence, was Lady Alicia Hay's great uncle, and Lady Anne Erskine, the bosom friend of the illustrious Countess of Huntingdon, was her great aunt. Of this estimable lady, Lord Chancellor Erskine is reported to have said that he considered it the highest honour reflected on him and his family, that Lady Anne Erskine was his sister.

"His lordship's departure (says Lady Huntingdon) was not only happy, but triumphant and glorious. Though arrived at the very summit of assurance, and experiencing much of those rapturous communications which are often made at the last moments to the souls of departing saints, he felt abased in the dust on account of his own vileness and utter wretchedness, and his continual cry was—God be merciful to me a sinner! I have witnessed the dismissal of many from the burden of mortality, but I have seldom seen an end more satisfactory, more solidly happy, or more triumphant."—*Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, vol. 2, p. 2.*

Dr. John Erskine, one of the most distinguished ornaments of the Scottish Church in the last century, and a man of rare talents, both natural and acquired, was related to the family of the Earl of Buchan. His grandfather, Colonel Erskine, was the son of Henry,

* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of all his saints, and delightful is it to us to record the pious life and happy dismissal of the meanest among them; but considering the peculiar temptations to earthliness attendant on high rank and opulence, and looking at the scripture declaration which carries so stern an aspect to the aristocracy,—"*Not many noble are called*,"—we feel it incumbent on us to notice here the happy death of an amiable nobleman, the Earl of Ducie, which took place in Gloucestershire, on the 2nd of June, 1853.

One who was present throughout, and watched and tended him with filial affection, says, "I had heard and read of many happy deaths, but never knew of anything like this. His constant cry is, 'I have found a Saviour; and now I long to be away, and to be with my God!' All the pent-up thoughts have given way; all reserve is gone, and he calls upon us continually to join in blessing and praising God for his great mercies to him. Colonel Kingcote and Mr. Child are constantly with him. He seems perfectly happy in his own thoughts. He tells us not to lament him; that in leaving the world he has nothing to regret."

* * * *

"He was now wholly occupied and engrossed with a sense of the boundings of God's grace to him, yet penetrated with the deepest sense of contrition and lowliness, thinking that he had glorified God so little in life, who had done so much for him. It was as though he could never abase himself enough; nor exalt Christ enough; nor magnify enough the power of that religion which had achieved in him so great a blessing." He once pathetically said, "Never had a man such ties to life as I have; never such a family to leave,—and yet I long to be away."—*See an interesting Sermon on the Death of the Earl of Ducie, by the Rev. S. Thodey.*

second Lord Cardross. Dr. Erskine was colleague with the celebrated Dr. Robertson, the historian, in the charge of the Old Grey Friars Parish, in Edinburgh; but while the latter was a mere amiable man of letters, who could not distinguish the true from the false in the highest and best of all knowledge;—the former was a sound minister of divine truth, a noble man in every sense of the word, laboriously endeavouring to lead his erring fellow-sinners in the right way to lasting happiness. Robertson never knew how great man's loss was by the apostacy of our first parents, and therefore could never comprehend the immense gain of the believer in Jesus Christ. He knew much of the facts of history, but nothing of its true philosophy and most important teachings. He never clearly saw God in history.

On his arrival at South Lynn, Mr. Hay considered that the first thing to be done to improve the best interests of the people, was to give them better church accommodation. He therefore immediately adopted means for newly pewing the church, and erecting a new singing gallery, which he accomplished by voluntary subscriptions. His next effort was to establish a day school for both sexes; and an old factory was bought and converted into two large rooms, one for boys and the other for girls. This building and its repairs cost about £ 800., which was raised partly by subscription, and partly by a large bazaar, held at the Town Hall. The schools were soon well filled, and he was indefatigable in his attention to promote their prosperity. Cottage lectures were regularly delivered by him in different parts of the parish, and were well attended by the poor, as well as by many of the higher classes of society. He also met some of his parishioners monthly, in a friend's house, to expound the scriptures and answer questions. These ministrations greatly increased the attendance of the poor at church, and the congregation generally was so enlarged that he had serious thoughts of building a new church, and commenced a plan of weekly contributions for the purpose. He often remarked that nothing gave him so much pleasure as to see the church well filled with the poor. One of his

parishioners, worthy of all credit, who knew him well, says that he lived in the affections of the poor, and indeed of all who knew him, and that the spiritual welfare of his people was his greatest concern. He was very punctual in his pastoral visits, never disappointing the expectations of his people in that particular, unless prevented by sickness. When any persons accustomed to a regular attendance at church were absent, he would call upon them and endeavour to ascertain the cause; and he frequently introduced his remarks by saying, "As you were prevented attending divine service on Sunday, I will give you an outline of my sermon."

He relinquished the curacy of South Lynn early in 1844, on being appointed to the vicarage of Netherbury with Beaminster, in May of that year. The members of his congregation at that curacy, in permanent proof of their love, presented him, on his departure, with a silver inkstand, "in grateful remembrance of the affectionate anxiety which eminently distinguished his zealous exertions to promote their spiritual welfare." And, as "a memento of the South Lynn national school children's gratitude and dutiful affection," a prayer book was sent him by them, with their prayer for him expressed in the words of Boaz to Ruth, in Ruth ii. 12,—"*The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel.*"

When it was that light from the higher world first shined upon his heart, and he set out from the City of Destruction to that of God;—and when and where it was that, after passing through the mental distress common to all such travellers, he was first favoured to catch a glimpse of the Delectable Mountains, and to have leaves from the Tree of Life brought to him for his healing and consolation, we have not been able to ascertain. But we rather think it was about the time of his ordination that his heart was, for the first time, quickened from above. He has several times spoken to the writer, of persons who had been apparently quickened to a new and spiritual life during severe sickness, referring, among others, to the case of Sir

Fowell Buxton; and in an illness with which he was visited some time after his ordination, we have reason to believe that God's work in his heart was much deepened and established; but he was always so reserved on anything relating to himself, that we possess no certain and specific information on the subject.

How wonderful and unparalleled are the grace and goodness displayed in the redemption of a soul; when God apprehends a man—draws him out from the multitude—darts a new and divine light into his mind—changes the main current of his thoughts, and imparts a new bias to his will and affections! He has then given to him a real intuitive sight of the glory of God, for he sees, after a new and divine manner, the glory of Christ in his person and redeeming work (2 Cor. iii. 18), and this is a spiritual sight of God's glory. In the thirteenth sermon inserted in these sheets, at p. 121, and also at p. 93, Mr. Hay very clearly states this truth. This apprehension by Jehovah is conversion, regeneration, and incipient sanctification. This is christianity, vital and enduring. The man now begins for the first time in his life, to take a step in the right direction. He is now affiliated to God, quickened to a new and endless life of perfect felicity. He becomes in fact a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter i. 4), and all the perfections of Jehovah are engaged to make him blessed. We have abundant and most satisfactory evidence that in this enviable state Mr. Hay took possession of the curacy of South Lynn.

Not very long after his appointment to the vicarage of Netherbury with Beaminster, the value of which was about £700. per annum, he felt a desire to effect a separation of the cures, wishing to see Beaminster made a distinct incumbency, under its own minister, —the total value being about £300. per annum. In this he happily succeeded, his curate there, the Rev. Samuel Flood, being appointed incumbent of that church in May, 1849; he himself retaining the vicarage of Netherbury.

His constitutional tendency to pulmonary consumption had become visible in very early life, and in 1846 he was seriously ill from affection of the chest, and obliged

to winter at Ventnor, from which he derived considerable relief. But the malady was too deeply rooted to be eradicated,—the phthisical diathesis was visible to every discerning eye; and he knew that his family was short-lived. Probably this led him to anticipate continued feeble health, and operated with his dislike to pluralities,* and his ardent desire to promote the highest interests of his parishioners as quickly and as efficiently as possible, in determining him to make a strenuous effort for the separation of these benefices. He was so thoroughly disinterested, that the honour, emoluments, and other advantages derived from retaining the united benefices never weighed with him an instant;

“His hopes immortal blew them by, as dust.”—

of which he subsequently gave another signal proof, in resigning also the vicarage of Netherbury, when he found that his health would not allow him to reside there constantly, or even frequently. It is true he held it only in charge for a minor; but life and health being always so uncertain, the minor might not have lived to take possession, and he could not have been influenced in resigning it years before it was likely to be required of him, except by what his christian conviction prompted, a determination to live out his christian principles, and to secure the best interests of the parishioners. Being rendered incapable of regularly taking the oversight of the parish, he would not have

* He was much of bishop Burnett's opinion that “pluralists are sacrilegious robbers of the revenues of the church.” It is related of that noble-minded bishop, who, by his eminent virtues, reflected great honour on the established church, that a clergyman in his diocese once asked him if, on the authority of St. Bernard, he might not hold two livings. “How will you be able to serve them both?” inquired the conscientious bishop. “I intend to officiate by deputy in one,” was the reply. “Will your deputy,” said the bishop, “be damned for you too? Believe me, you may serve your cure by proxy, but you must be damned in person.” Burnett's character has often been unjustly assailed; but the intimate friend of Leighton, the biographer of Hale, the mild yet dignified reprover of kings,—the bishop who, notwithstanding all his influence at court and his preferments, left nothing to his children but their mother's fortune, is in no want of proofs of virtue sufficient to refute all slanderers.

been satisfied with putting in a substitute to do a work which he considered he was bound to do himself, and therefore, in 1852, he resigned the benefice into the hands of the patron.

From the commencement of his labours at Netherbury to their close, he was much respected and esteemed, and commanded large congregations, many attending from neighbouring parishes. He held a Sunday evening service in a large room at the vicarage, "which was crowded," one of his parishioners says, "almost to suffocation, people coming from miles round;" and the people were convinced that he would have done far more had not his health and strength failed. Many of his parishioners there still speak of him with great affection, as "their worthy and much lamented pastor," and are wont to say—"We shall not have his like again."

He laboured to put a stop to Sunday trading in the parish, and frequently from the pulpit exhorted and most kindly advised all who were guilty of that sin to desist from it, showing them the great evil of it. He would say, "You acknowledge to me it is wrong, then why not leave it off, and not live in known sin." The vicar and churchwardens exercise control over some charity lands let out in gardens; and he endeavoured to prevent the occupiers from going for the produce, and otherwise idling there on the Sabbath day, by making a rule, that those who did so should forfeit their allotment.

One of his curates at Beaminster assures us that as long as he had strength for it, he worked well for the church there. It was not till after he had ceased to be vicar of that town, that this gentleman had an opportunity of hearing him preach, and then, he says,

"A very crowded congregation evinced the anxiety of his former people to hear him again. In the pulpit, as out of it, he was a holy man of God. His words were words of power. To great simplicity of language and earnestness of spirit, he added a winning, loving manner, which made his sermons *tell* on his hearers. When he preached last in Beaminster, his solemn exhortation—"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith,"—was like a voice from another

world.* Mr. Hay was highly valued by his old people; by all at least who knew how to value excellence and holy devotion. If he was ever slightly spoken of, it was by those who relished not his uncompromising faithfulness. I am told that among his happiest efforts in Beaminster were his missionary meetings, which he held quarterly. He conducted the whole himself, and kept the attention of the people on the stretch throughout by his felicitous method of handling dry details. He honoured me with his friendship, and I cherish the memory of it as one of the highest privileges of my life."

The preceding reference to his uncompromising faithfulness calls to our recollection a notable instance of it, while visiting a friend in the country. He considered the drawing-room of his friend's house was too finely and expensively furnished, and stuffed too full with furniture; and while expressing his satisfaction with every other part of the house, he, in a pointed but kind manner, told his host that he did not like *that* room, intimating that he thought its furniture unbecoming for a christian. How undeniable a proof of his friendship! Our friends never show us so great a favour as when they kindly tell us of our faults; and if we were both more ready to sound the note of alarm, and more willing to hearken to it, more solid proofs of our religion would be visible than are ordinarily to be met with.

* The sermon No. xi. p. 97.

CHAPTER III.

1844—1852.

The simplicity, humility, and modesty of his character.—
Deadness to the world—Chaplaincy of the Lock.—Fondness of retirement and rural scenes.—Sentiments on extempore preaching.—Self-renunciation.

His letters were few and short, which precludes our gratifying the reader with much of his correspondence. He seemed in writing to be always afraid of self-flattery, self-display, and resolved to say just as much as the occasion demanded, and nothing more. When reflecting on this circumstance, our thoughts have reverted to Leighton, who seems, from a principle of self-denial, to have been extremely averse to many and long letters; so much so, indeed, that one feels rather disappointed in reading some of them. For example, in one he wrote to a person under trouble of mind, his advice is very brief, and he plainly says, "I incline not to multiply words;" and in a letter to the Rev. James Aird, the minister of Troy, after having written a dozen lines, he says, "To strike up now to discourses of devotion, alas! what is there to be said but what you sufficiently know? Instead of all fine notions, I fly to *Lord have mercy upon me, Christ have mercy upon me.*" Leighton constantly and deeply lamented "so much talk and so little action; religion turned almost to a tune and air of words; and amidst all our pretty discourses, pusillanimous and base, and so easily dragged into the mire."

This, I cannot doubt, was very much the feeling of Mr. Hay; and however we may regret that he carried it so far as to deprive his friends and the church of a benefit they might have derived from a lengthened correspondence, we cannot do otherwise than honour the motive. His was probably an error on the right side, for unquestionably it is a far easier

thing to write well than to live well, and ours is rather a day of much speechifying and writing than of vigorous living Christian action. His life was one not of writing or talk, but of humiliation, meditation, and action.

As an evidence of vital christianity, nothing is equal to a mortified spirit. This will never deceive us. This is what we all ought to strive after above all things; it is a fountain of peace. This was the spirit that shone so resplendently in the life and letters of Leighton; and there was much of the same evidence in those of Mr. Hay. We do not mean to intimate that his piety and experience were equal to Leighton's—that they were of so exalted a degree—by no means; but they were of the same sublime character. This spirit pervades all the writings and letters of Dorney, and it was shown in his life; and we have heard Mr. Hay say that he scarcely knew any writer more exactly to his taste than Dorney. The high doctrines of absolute grace which Dorney unfolds, together with his exhortations to seek soul-renewing power, were precious to his heart; and the mighty struggles and conflicts, the unceasing temptations and warfare of this lonely wilderness, of which Dorney makes such frequent mention, were all his own painful and yet profitable experience, spiritually and effectually so. We have his convictions on this point in Sermon V., page 39, “This world is the battle-field of christians, and was never meant to be their rest—a dry wilderness, not sunny Canaan—an enemy's country, not Immanuel's land. *‘Ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you;’* and the way to it is *purposely* strewn with thorns, *intentionally* it is left a steep and fatiguing path.” And in Sermon IV., page 35, we have an exact portraiture of the author: “Every one who hath this hope (John iii. 3) is buoyed up, comforted, and made content with any portion now, because he lives for the things that are unseen,—he sees worthier objects of love among them, than he finds here. He waits for his good things hereafter, and neither desires nor expects them here. *‘In the world ye shall*

have tribulation ; and if there were nothing beyond it, Christ's disciples would be most infatuated and miserable. But to them there opens a door of hope."

Dorney says to a friend (1677)—

"How it is with you I know not ; but for my own part, I have and do pass my pilgrimage here through a thorny wilderness of cares, difficulties, and temptations, all along ; and do expect no other till I leave my sinful nature, and a dark, defiled world behind me ; for I have abundant daily proof that this lower state is not my rest, but I wait and hope for that rest which remaineth."

Mr. Hay knew that the inward experience of the truth, that the world is a wilderness to every christian traveller, calls for help and consolation of a peculiar kind—a consolation which is ever divinely vouchsafed, more or less, to all saints ; and we can never forget with what evident gratification he spoke on this subject as set forth by Dr. Love, in his sermon *On Strong Consolation*. He most feelingly enumerated Dr. Love's several reasons why mankind need strong consolation, remarking that it was not simply or chiefly because of the weariness of the way, but, as Dr. Love states, 1. *On account of the vast capacity and extensive nature of the soul.* 2. *Because of the awful terrors of conscience to which we are liable.* 3. *Because of the importance and weight of that course of obedience in which we are bound to glorify God, both in life and in death.* 4. *Because of our natural depravity, and the force of the temptations to which we are exposed.* 5. *Because of the greatness of the external troubles and distresses we are liable to.* 6. *Because of those with whom we are connected.* 7. *Because we live continually upon the borders of an unknown and unsearchable eternity.*

He did not dwell upon remote events. He seemed to have no anxiety about the future, but thankfully received the blessings God gave him, from day to day, taking every day of the manna that He sent him, as a genuine Israelite, without seeking to make any provision for himself for the morrow. Often have we heard him say that he considered it a great advantage to

possess little of the world's prosperity, that he was thankful to God he was not rich. Again and again he repeated, with evident delight, the following verse in Wesley's well-known hymn—

“No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in this wilderness;
A poor wayfaring man,
I lodge awhile in tents below;
Or gladly wander to and fro,
Till I my Canaan gain.”

By his deportment and conversation, he gave proof of a continual filial dependence upon God, for whatever depended upon Him, and only thought of being faithful himself in the performance of his duties, and the enjoyment of his privileges. Hence he seemed to possess great peace and acquiescence of soul in whatever occurred, being seldom ruffled by anything, but yielding himself to the silent martyrdom of self; in which he felt the true life of faith essentially to consist.

He embraced Heber's sentiments with his whole heart:—

“Hearts good and true
Have wishes few
In narrow circles bounded,
And hope that lives
On what God gives
Is christian hope well founded.

“Small things are best:
Grief and unrest
To rank and wealth are given;
But little things
On little wings
Bear little souls to heaven.”

He rose completely above all the prepossessions and prejudices of *caste*. He not only never was forward to speak of persons of rank and opulence, but evidently avoided it studiously; and whenever it was unavoidable, his references were of the simplest and shortest description possible. It was visible to all his friends that he attached no value to wealth, or

rank, or mere talent.* Only noble character was, in his eye, of any real worth, and this alone won his regard and esteem.—Wherever he recognized that, his benignant smile testified his cordial approbation and affection, whatever were the outward position and circumstances of the individual. It is true that his general bearing was what we are wont to designate aristocratic, and on a first introduction he manifested the peculiar reserve usual with people of high birth; but a few moments' conversation with congenial minds was sufficient to dissipate all that distance, and he was found to be among the most simple and affable of mortals. If in character, in manners, in style, in all things, the supreme excellence is humility and simplicity, then, by the favour of God, our friend was raised not only far, far above the ordinary race of people of education, and those of the most elevated rank, but also above the majority of christians.

His spirit was so entirely christian, so catholic, so lovely, that it embraced the whole human family. He considered that every one had a claim upon him for sympathy, consideration, and service, whatever might be his station in life, or his denominational peculiarities as a religious professor; and as a proof of his catholic spirit, it may be mentioned, that during a visit to a friend, a part of whose family sometimes attended the Wesleyan chapel, and who spoke in terms of commendation of the minister then preaching there, he said he would go himself in the evening to hear him. He wisely, as we think, changed his intention, for he had been preaching in the morning in the parish church; and after consideration, he judged that the circumstance that he had attended at the Wesleyan chapel in the evening becoming known, might so prejudice the minds of some who had heard him in the morning

* A lady making a profession of religion, who was visited by the Hon. and Rev. B. Cadogan, made many inquiries and remarks relative to his birth, family, and connexions. "Dear madam," said he, "I wonder you can spend so much time upon so poor a subject! I called to converse with you upon the things of eternity." This was precisely the spirit and practice of Mr. Hay. He would instantly check all conversation on so poor a subject.

as to interfere with his usefulness. Here was true self-denial, for the glory of God and the possible advantage of others. To himself he thought it was a loss—to others he hoped it might be a gain.

No one of any discernment, and who has had considerable intercourse with people of different religious persuasions, can have failed to observe,—and, if right-minded, to observe with regret,—how commonly each denomination plumes itself upon its presumed comparative purity and usefulness. Nothing is more common than for the dissenter to imagine and extol the great purity and efficiency of the voluntary churches, when compared with those of the Establishment, or for one form of dissent to entertain a similar feeling in favour of itself above the others; while the churchman is too commonly proud of the peculiar and lofty distinction of his church. Our friend was remarkably free from all such religious bias and bigotry. Of course, he felt a decided preference for his own communion; but so little did this injure his spirit, that we never heard him, even on a single occasion, speak in the slightest degree to the disparagement of dissenters of any class; and a stranger might have passed whole days in his company without discovering to what denomination he belonged. He was attached to the Church of England from principle and a firm persuasion of its superior excellence; holding its articles, homilies and liturgy, to be essentially and fundamentally scriptural. And yet, being a great friend to the discipline of the Church, I may take this opportunity of remarking that he lamented it was so seldom and imperfectly enforced on just occasions. He ever held it most unjustifiable and criminal in the bishops to allow clergymen, impugning and denying some of the fundamental principles of christianity, to continue to hold a license to preach.

He disliked promiscuous and large companies, but much enjoyed a little good society; he talked freely, with great simplicity, in company, and was always cheerful. He was as far removed as most men we ever met with from anything stiff and formal, being rather inclined to liveliness and a gay carriage, so that as he loved the

society of young people, they loved and admired his. Being, on one occasion, left in the country with a large family of children, during the absence of the parents, the report the young ladies gave their father on his return was, that "they had all caught the *hay fever*." The "busy hum of men" possessed no attractions for him: his heart, like Leighton's, was rather with his intimate friends in their country retreats, and among the birds in the woods, where he could indulge without restraint in solitary musings on the high things of God. He would frequently speak of the happiness he enjoyed in the quiet of the domestic circle in the country. Accordingly, he was exceedingly fond of all rural scenes, of flowery fields, the melody of birds, and wild mountain scenery; and rejoiced to have frequent opportunities of silent musing in such delightful retreats, and there to think of God—the infinite beauty—the fair original of all that is lovely and imposing. He considered that the chief and best part of religion consisted in delighting in God, in praise and thanksgiving; that such delight is a primary duty, to which he alludes in the following letter, written from Corrimony, a friend's house at the head of Loch Ness:—

" Corrimony, August 12, 1851.

" MY DEAR SIR,—I have been here the last ten days, enjoying the sweet and balmy air of the Highlands, and deriving, I think, strength and health from it. We are not at Lakefield, which is to be sold, but at the old house at the end of the Glen, beyond which is a beautiful birch forest; and above, the braes of Urquhart, surrounded with ancient hills, where the air seems to have a purity and taste that you cannot find in the south. In such scenes you can put in practice what Ruskin well calls 'the duty of delight.' As God rejoices himself in his works, so should his creatures, praising him for the beauties his creative hand places before their eyes, and looking forward to the more glorious scenes to be presently unfolded, in which his own essential glory will be clearly manifested. We often talk of you and Mrs. ———. Miss Ogilvy longs greatly to see you and her again. I hope that I may have that great pleasure this autumn. We expect to return southwards in October. I am just reading Foster's Introductory Essay to 'Doddridge's Rise and Progress:' it is a most

powerful and impressive appeal on behalf of religion to the unbeliever, the young, and the worldly, in succession, supposing the book (Doddridge) to be lying before them, and a pious friend expostulating with them on the subject it treats of. In your intercessions, ask that our hearts may be filled with good treasure, of which they have not the least particle of their own; but they are capable of being filled from that inexhaustible treasury of grace of which the love of God has the command. I hope you will favour me soon with a letter. Direct to Aikenhead House, Glasgow, where I expect to be next week.—Believe me, yours affectionately,
“S. HAY.”

In another letter, written about this time, he says :—

“I was in the Highlands when your last came, at a place where every beauty of natural scenery is combined, belonging to a cousin of my wife’s, on Loch Fine. We expect to be here through this month, and probably in the north of England in November. I long very much to see you again—it is now a year since I had that pleasure. Of how much greater consequence and value will a year seem, when looked at from the other side of time and death, than it does now, when a due appreciation of it is of most importance! Never think your epistles are “prosy:” they cannot be too long or too frequent for me. I am always the better for even a few lines from you. Do favour me as often as you can with your Cardiphonia.—Believe me, very truly yours,
“S. HAY.”

About the year 1850, finding that he could not at that time reside at Netherbury, he had some thoughts of becoming a candidate for the chaplaincy of the Lock; but, learning that the stipend attached to it was about £. 500 per annum, he, with his characteristic humility, at once considered his prospects there to have vanished, and thought no more of it. That which would have stimulated the majority of men to renewed and most vigorous exertions, operated on him in the opposite way. With ability and christian experience equal to the demands of any church in London, he ever thought himself among the least qualified for any important post.

“Lyndhurst, June 11.

* * *

“You seem to me to lay down no more than that the State is bound to require the teaching of the Scriptures in

all schools, and should aid none, when the authorized version of them was not in daily use. This is a simple and intelligible principle. Let those who object to the condition carry out their plans by themselves. Let them not expect help from a Protestant state, which should require the free reading of the Bible to be an essential part of education, and demand it as a *sine quâ non* in granting aid.

"My prospects of the Lock chaplaincy have quite vanished this morning, on hearing from Mr. Garnier, the retiring chaplain, of the value of the appointment, much greater than I supposed, £. 500 a year, and the many candidates, some able and well qualified, in the field. There is a large chapel, containing 1,200 people. The income is from the pew rents. It would have been an experiment what effect preaching, modelled as much as possible on your principles, would have on a voluntary congregation, in collecting or repelling; but to preach on those principles, so far as relates to particular duties, is what I feel ill qualified for, without some more definite instruction. Whenever I next see you I should like to go over a number of such subjects, with a view of learning the best method of handling and drawing them out.

"I hope that, whoever does gain the appointment, the mantle of Thomas Scott may descend on him, and that he may have grace to be as faithful (he might, perhaps, be a little more winning and tender in his manner than that stern old gentleman probably was). I am now supplying an interregnum here, and preaching twice on Sabbaths. Kind regards to your circle.—Yours affectionately, "S. HAY."

The following letter, addressed to a lay friend, presents further proof of his humility—of his mean opinion of himself, and shows how strong a hold that most fundamental principle of christianity, "personal crucifixion," had taken of his heart. The apostolic injunction, "Let each esteem others better than himself," was remarkably fulfilled in him. Many who had not half his ability or piety, he thought superior to himself in all respects.

"Lyndhurst, July 8, 1850.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have to thank you for a long and valuable letter. I remember Mr. M'Ghee's Exposition of the Ephesians exactly illustrates your remarks on the defects of evangelical preaching. The doctrines of the Epistle were ably expounded, but the 4th and following chapters were most meagrely treated—no minuteness of detail or of application at all. I trust your book may stir many of us to

attend to that neglected branch of instruction. We might take a lesson from the Tractarians, some of whom dwell much on personal crucifixion. Why should you not, now you have achieved one task, begin another, and write a tract on this subject, Personal Crucifixion; first as a series of papers for *my* private instruction—your thoughts on what it involves—illustrations of its actings—its bearings on daily life—exemplifications of it. How thankful I should be if you would favour me with a succession of short papers on this comprehensive subject—an expansion of Gal. v. 24, taking up the subject in the various lights it presents itself in to you, going into minutiae. This is what would constitute its value. I know of nothing *minute* enough.

“Do, my dear sir, think of this.

* * * *

* now let us have the other great branch of christianity treated of. Let it be first a series of familiar papers for *me*. I should indeed be most thankful for them, for personal use and instruction, and also as a guide and syllabus for teaching others.

“They could be written at your leisure, and forwarded one at a time. Preach through me to others—preach *to* me. You know what M’Cheyne says,—a word spoken to a minister is worth a word spoken to 2,000 or 3,000 souls sometimes.”

His delivery in the pulpit was not a mere reading off his book; nevertheless, his friend had written to him, venturing to advise a trial of a more decidedly extemporaneous manner of preaching, as likely to be accompanied with a freshness, earnestness, and direct application, and likewise such a feeling of dependence upon help from heaven, as throws a charm around such kinds of appeal which no reading of sermons can possibly possess; added to which, his friend says, “is taking hold of the minds and hearts of your hearers with your eye, looking them steadfastly and earnestly in the face,—a great part of the power of effectual speaking in the pulpit,—much of which is lost in reading.” He possessed considerable facility in speaking extempore, as was proved by the ease and force with which he expounded scripture in the family; and it cannot be doubted that had he ventured more in this way in the pulpit, he would have been blessed with success. We are not advocates for every clergyman’s preaching extempore.

Many have no gift of that kind; but those who have the gift will not take it amiss in us to drop a word of encouragement to them to cultivate it, using their notes only as helps, as crutches, in case they are in danger of breaking down—to refresh their memory in particular parts, and to ensure the exact delivery of important sentiments. Mr. Hay, in the conclusion of the letter just extracted from, says—

“I am not of your mind about extempore preaching. What is delivered from the pulpit should be clearly expressed, as forcibly as it can be put, connectedly. If I was without my book, I should ramble sadly. I find I can better—in clearer words—put down beforehand what I want to say, and then deliver it (not a mere reading it off the book), than the contrary. There is nothing to hinder one’s being quite as precise and minute in writing as in speaking. An excellent lady told me the other day of a London clergyman, a sound and good man, whose ministry, in her opinion, was injured by his habit of extempore preaching; he never seemed, she said, to be at the bottom of his subject. I find that unless I have time to choose my words, I express myself in a rambling, unconnected way. I often interpolate in the pulpit, but I *do* like to have the main of what I am going to say before me.

“My congregation here is not a mere country one—there are several gentry. I see and speak with all possible plainness and simplicity. I have been dwelling lately on the law, its nature, demands, and penalty.

“My former rector, Mr. Pelham, preached much better extempore than from writing; others, I have heard, are better the other way.

“I am persuaded that at present, at any rate, I do best in writing, and can make things plainer and more intelligibly so than by extempore speaking. I should much prefer the latter, and endeavour to combine its effect with the other modes, by getting so acquainted with what I write as not to be chained to my book.

“I have been just reading Bishop Shirley’s life—such a good, sound, healthy-minded man—a most active and laborious minister. He died, you know, just as he arrived at his bishoprick. You would enjoy the biography.

“Believe me, yours sincerely and affectionately,

“S. HAY.”

His preaching was, on a particular occasion, described by the writer as very enlightened, solemn, and search-

ing; on which a young clergyman, who knew and loved him, says—

“With these remarks I should be inclined to cavil, only on the ground that they do not appear to me to give any adequate idea of its exceedingly impressive character. I do not remember to have heard any man whose preaching displayed more intense feeling. To me there seemed a *reality* about it which is rarely met with.”

A special characteristic of all saints is a deep inward conviction of personal corruption and moral weakness, attended with real self-abasement; to which, as a matter of his own experience, the following letter particularly refers (*to a friend, dated Aikenhead House, Glasgow, Nov. 8, 1851*):—

* * * * *

“I hope, however, to manage to make my way to you for a few days when we come south, towards the end of this month. It seems a long time since I have seen you. The controversy we have in hand is more easily managed by word of mouth than by letter. Your illustrations appear to me hardly to meet the subject, and one thing in them gives me pain—I mean, where you seem to imply, though I dare say it was not in your heart, superiority on my part and inferiority on yours. My dear friend, I am a very poor, vile creature—less than the least—a monument of divine forbearance—a chief among sinners, not saints. I feel this from the very bottom of the heart, and cannot bear to be exalted.

“I fear I shall disappoint your expectations as a reformer. I am in favour of many reforms in the church, but they are such as seem perfectly impossible in the present state of things, till there is less excitement; and I think it becomes me rather to follow those who, from long experience, have the best right to speak and be heard, than to thrust myself forward with my notions of what should or should not be done.

“I must stop, for the post goes out so early. There is not much movement yet in Glasgow against the Papal usurpation. What think you of the second clause in Lord J. Russell's letter? I have had duty at St. Jude's, the English chapel in Glasgow, for the last three Sundays, and continue my assistance while here. I am so glad to be thus able to exercise my ministry wherever I am.”

* * *

How ready he was to ask and receive suggestions and instruction from others, the following extracts from letters to lay friends, furnish additional pleasing and convincing proofs.

* * * * *

"Mr. Widdrington has asked me to preach for the Irish Societies at Bath next month; but, intimating that the people prefer extempore addresses, it is not very likely I shall go.

"I have been thinking you might often supply me with useful suggestions for preaching. You could jot down from time to time subjects necessary to be insisted on, prejudices to be dealt with, delusions unveiled, mistakes corrected, &c., as they occur to you in your reading and meditations. Have a bit of paper at hand, on which such things, as they arise, may be marked, as briefly and disjointedly as you like; for the preaching that is to awaken and impress must only deal in part with abstractions, and must likewise have much of the application of doctrines to the common modes of thought and feeling among the people. Pray think of this; and by your prayers also strive to help forward, up the narrow, steep hill, an indolent limping traveller.

"With kindest remembrances to Mrs. ——— and Miss ———, believe me, yours affectionately,

"S. HAY."

To a friend in Edinburgh:—

✧ "Ventnor, Nov. 7, 1847.

"I am much interested by your remark on Lev. xii.* How completely hid from many, and how dimly perceptible to any of us, the meaning of that little word *Sin*! What an object would a *single* sinner be, standing solitary in God's universe! How other beings would shrink from him—pity him, tremble for him! For what would they consent to stand in his place?—a *single* enemy defying the Almighty—one daring to say, 'I will not.' What an object in creation! It is, beyond doubt, a principal thing with the

* A lay friend in Edinburgh, to whom he was strongly attached, and who saw many proofs of his humility and modesty, says, in a letter to the editor, "With the loveliest humility Mr. Hay urged me, from time to time, to send him what he called '*dottings*' on Scripture, and I ventured sometimes to comply with his request. The remark to which Mr. Hay alludes above was to the following effect (Lev. xii. 2, &c.):—'How affecting, to think of our ever-blessed God looking down the stream of time, so to speak, and seeing that every human being whom He was to bring into existence would be a rebel against him!'"

prince of this world to keep us all from getting a glimpse of sin as it is—remarkable, his successful application to his purposes on both sides of the question. ‘God is altogether such a one as yourself. He thinks as lightly of transgression as you do. His anger arises from resentment, like yours—hence appeasable;’ or else, ‘He is such a one as yourself, and will not freely pardon for another’s sake.’ What a strong ground in pleading with God is that verse in Ps. cxix, ‘*Thy hands have made me and fashioned me:*’—hence, ‘for-sake not, then, the work of *thine own hands.*’ A perverted work it is here, dishonouring its Maker—a broken vessel, yet capable of being re-made, created anew; for the new spiritual creation, as for the natural, there needs but one word from God—‘*Live.*’”

A clerical friend of Mr. Hay, who was so kind as to superintend the transcription of a part of the sermons here published, in transmitting them to the editor, made particular reference to Sermon XV, *On the immense profit of Godliness*, as being “especially interesting, from giving indications of the feelings of the writer during his long illness.” And a member of the family of the Hon. Thomas Erskine (lately Judge of the Court of Common Pleas),—an affectionate, hospitable family, dearly beloved by him,—in a letter written to Lady Erroll, a few days before the preceding communication, and after hearing that some of his sermons were about to be published, says,—

“We are glad indeed to hear that we are to have the comfort and pleasure of a volume of sermons by dear Mr. Hay. There was one sermon which he preached at Binfield in 1851, on ‘Godliness having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,’ which struck us at the time as so descriptive of his own experience and history that we cannot help hoping that it may be one of those selected for publication.”

He possessed an excellent judgment of both men and things; and on questions of Greek criticism connected with the New Testament, we have heard him deliver himself in a most discerning, able manner, far beyond ordinary scholars; but, as already hinted, it was not so much what he said, or what he did in point of extensive labour, as his uniform calmness, simplicity, contentment, humility, mildness,—in a word, the abnegation of self—which so distinguished him.

Many far exceeded him in activity and religious works, in fluency of expression, in eloquence, and conversational ability, in striking out fine thoughts,—in extent of religious reading; but very few equalled, and still fewer surpassed him, in the manifestation of the temper, disposition, and deportment essentially distinctive of the christian character. The former gain for their possessor a wide reputation, but are notwithstanding too often found alone,—the sound religious principle is wanting; the latter never flourish but in the children of God, who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and they never fail to bring forth fruit that is abiding, and (John, xv. 16) to issue in the kingdom which has no end.

It will be inferred, from the testimonies, correspondence, and facts here introduced, that he was one who, in situations which severely try our principles, would have stood firm as a rock; and that his desires being set on things above, wealth, titles, precedence, reputation, had no attractions for him. While for these objects the vast mass of mankind stoop to every thing, however mean and base, he knew how to spurn them all in the pursuit of better things. He took a high standing among those—too few, alas! in this and every age,—who love nothing better than virtue and usefulness, and fear nothing more than guilt and idleness.

“Now see the man immortal: him, I mean,
Who lives as such; whose heart, full bent on heaven,
Leans all that way, his bias to the stars.
The world's dark shades, in contrast set, shall raise
His lustre more; though bright, without a foil:
Observe his lovely portrait, and admire;
Nor stop at wonder: imitate and live.”

To hear him speak, with evident and great satisfaction, of an easy cure which he had been invited to in London, after his resignation of the vicarage of Netherbury,—and to which invitation he was not averse, from finding London warmer in the winter than the country,—we might have imagined it to be the golden lectureship of Lothbury or the deanery of St. Paul's. Far from it. It was that of chaplain to a benevolent ladies' society, with a stipend of £ 50: a year! But

his only thought was, where and how he could be usefully employed—how he could effectually make known that religion which is the bond of charity, the curb of evil passions, the consolation of the wretched, the *hope* of the dying. The emolument, although an object with him, as supplying unavoidable expenses, was no object in desire. He was not less thankful for £ 50. per annum than most men would be for £ 500.

Brief and imperfect as our sketch unavoidably is, we have here recorded the sentiments and walk of one to whom neither believer nor infidel could point as to a "*solemn sham*;" of one who, so far from preaching and not practising, eager to grasp some of the good things of the Church,—"*preached righteousness quite as much by the silent eloquence of example*," as by his words; "*who dared not defile himself with worldly lusts*;"—who lived in the world as one not of the world, and who was, wherever he went, *a witness for God*. He was one not only of noble birth, but what is far better, of noble sentiments and true magnanimity. He drew his sentiments from the heart of Christ; he formed his life by that heavenly word which enlightens the heart, and from which alone fallen man can draw the doctrines of purity and salvation.

This imperfect outline is not given to magnify the creature, but to magnify the grace of God in him. Notwithstanding all the excellencies with which his Maker had endowed him, he was far from perfect; he was still an erring, sinful man, and he felt and lamented it. "*There is no man that liveth and sinneth not*." No one we ever knew was more impressed with a sense of his personal defects and unworthiness, or felt more deeply every day his need of the atoning grace of Christ; so that his language uniformly was, "I am constantly learning more of the reality and subtlety of Satan's devices, and the incurable corruption of the natural heart;" and he drew his hope and consolation, not from anything he had done, not from the virtues of a well-spent life, but solely from the sacrifice and intercession of the Son of God, saying, "Certainly the secret of happiness and composure is the sense of belonging to Christ."

CHAPTER IV.

His opinions on the primary fundamental doctrine of man's depravity, and the absolute necessity of a new creation, in order to real virtue here and felicity hereafter—Baptismal Regeneration unscriptural—The unchangeableness of God's love—The sovereignty of God.

ALTHOUGH the Bible explicitly and repeatedly declares the desperate deceitfulness of the human heart, and the unlimited wickedness of human life, Gen. vi. 5,—Ephes. ii. 1, 2, 3,—Psa. li. 5;—teaching that the radical cause of the many forms of evil, abounding at all times, is to be found in the innate principle of evil in man, Rom. viii. 7;—and although all mankind have the most abundant proofs of these facts, not only in their own history, but also in that of their servants, relations, connexions, and neighbours,—confirmed by universal experience,—still these are truths which we are very slow to believe, and seldom admit to the fullest extent for any great length of time. To believe that man universally, as he comes into the world, is so totally ruined in his moral nature and affections, as to be altogether earthly and sensual, and moreover that to the subtilty and penetration of a demon, he joins also the malice;—that in the main he is so intensely selfish as to disregard altogether the claims and necessities of others, when they clash with his own,—a wolf for rapine, and a fox for wiles;—that his pride is so horrible as to bid defiance to all adequate description*:—we say to believe all this, is so startling and shocking,

* Many of the deepest thinkers, men had in high reputation in the world of science and letters—for example, Pascal, Locke, Hale, Wilberforce—unequivocally assert, that so deep and total is the depravity of man, that in consequence our whole behaviour is naturally a perpetual constraint—human life nothing but a perpetual illusion, an interchange of falsehood and deception—that man is full of disguise, falsehood, and hypocrisy, towards both himself and others.

his only thought was, where and how he could be usefully employed—how he could effectually make known that religion which is the bond of charity, the curb of evil passions, the consolation of the wretched, the *hope* of the dying. The emolument, although an object with him, as supplying unavoidable expenses, was no object in desire. He was not less thankful for £ 50. per annum than most men would be for £ 500.

Brief and imperfect as our sketch unavoidably is, we have here recorded the sentiments and walk of one to whom neither believer nor infidel could point as to a "*solemn sham*;" of one who, so far from preaching and not practising, eager to grasp some of the good things of the Church,—"*preached righteousness quite as much by the silent eloquence of example,*" as by his words; "*who dared not defile himself with worldly lusts*;"—who lived in the world as one not of the world, and who was, wherever he went, *a witness for God*. He was one not only of noble birth, but what is far better, of noble sentiments and true magnanimity. He drew his sentiments from the heart of Christ; he formed his life by that heavenly word which enlightens the heart, and from which alone fallen man can draw the doctrines of purity and salvation.

This imperfect outline is not given to magnify the creature, but to magnify the grace of God in him. Notwithstanding all the excellencies with which his Maker had endowed him, he was far from perfect; he was still an erring, sinful man, and he felt and lamented it. "*There is no man that liveth and sinneth not.*" No one we ever knew was more impressed with a sense of his personal defects and unworthiness, or felt more deeply every day his need of the atoning grace of Christ; so that his language uniformly was, "I am constantly learning more of the reality and subtlety of Satan's devices, and the incurable corruption of the natural heart;" and he drew his hope and consolation, not from anything he had done, not from the virtues of a well-spent life, but solely from the sacrifice and intercession of the Son of God, saying, "Certainly the secret of happiness and composure is the sense of *belonging to Christ.*"

CHAPTER IV.

His opinions on the primary fundamental doctrine of man's depravity, and the absolute necessity of a new creation, in order to real virtue here and felicity hereafter—Baptismal Regeneration unscriptural—The unchangeableness of God's love—The sovereignty of God.

ALTHOUGH the Bible explicitly and repeatedly declares the desperate deceitfulness of the human heart, and the unlimited wickedness of human life, Gen. vi. 5,—Ephes. ii. 1, 2, 3,—Psa. li. 5;—teaching that the radical cause of the many forms of evil, abounding at all times, is to be found in the innate principle of evil in man, Rom. viii. 7;—and although all mankind have the most abundant proofs of these facts, not only in their own history, but also in that of their servants, relations, connexions, and neighbours,—confirmed by universal experience,—still these are truths which we are very slow to believe, and seldom admit to the fullest extent for any great length of time. To believe that man universally, as he comes into the world, is so totally ruined in his moral nature and affections, as to be altogether earthly and sensual, and moreover that to the subtilty and penetration of a demon, he joins also the malice;—that in the main he is so intensely selfish as to disregard altogether the claims and necessities of others, when they clash with his own,—a wolf for rapine, and a fox for wiles;—that his pride is so horrible as to bid defiance to all adequate description*:—we say to believe all this, is so startling and shocking,

* Many of the deepest thinkers, men had in high reputation in the world of science and letters—for example, Pascal, Locke, Hale, Wilberforce—unequivocally assert, that so deep and total is the depravity of man, that in consequence our whole behaviour is naturally a perpetual constraint—human life nothing but a perpetual illusion, an interchange of falsehood and deception—that man is full of disguise, falsehood, and hypocrisy, towards both himself and others.

his only thought was, where and how he could be usefully employed—how he could effectually make known that religion which is the bond of charity, the curb of evil passions, the consolation of the wretched, the *hope* of the dying. The emolument, although an object with him, as supplying unavoidable expenses, was no object in desire. He was not less thankful for £ 50. per annum than most men would be for £ 500.

Brief and imperfect as our sketch unavoidably is, we have here recorded the sentiments and walk of one to whom neither believer nor infidel could point as to a "*solemn sham*;" of one who, so far from preaching and not practising, eager to grasp some of the good things of the Church,—"*preached righteousness quite as much by the silent eloquence of example*," as by his words; "*who dared not defile himself with worldly lusts*;"—who lived in the world as one not of the world, and who was, wherever he went, *a witness for God*. He was one not only of noble birth, but what is far better, of noble sentiments and true magnanimity. He drew his sentiments from the heart of Christ; he formed his life by that heavenly word which enlightens the heart, and from which alone fallen man can draw the doctrines of purity and salvation.

This imperfect outline is not given to magnify the creature, but to magnify the grace of God in him. Notwithstanding all the excellencies with which his Maker had endowed him, he was far from perfect; he was still an erring, sinful man, and he felt and lamented it. "*There is no man that liveth and sinneth not*." No one we ever knew was more impressed with a sense of his personal defects and unworthiness, or felt more deeply every day his need of the atoning grace of Christ; so that his language uniformly was, "*I am constantly learning more of the reality and subtlety of Satan's devices, and the incurable corruption of the natural heart*;" and he drew his hope and consolation, not from anything he had done, not from the virtues of a well-spent life, but solely from the sacrifice and intercession of the Son of God, saying, "*Certainly the secret of happiness and composure is the sense of belonging to Christ*."

CHAPTER IV.

His opinions on the primary fundamental doctrine of man's depravity, and the absolute necessity of a new creation, in order to real virtue here and felicity hereafter—Baptismal Regeneration unscriptural—The unchangeableness of God's love—The sovereignty of God.

ALTHOUGH the Bible explicitly and repeatedly declares the desperate deceitfulness of the human heart, and the unlimited wickedness of human life, Gen. vi. 5,—Ephes. ii. 1, 2, 3,—Psa. li. 5;—teaching that the radical cause of the many forms of evil, abounding at all times, is to be found in the innate principle of evil in man, Rom. viii. 7;—and although all mankind have the most abundant proofs of these facts, not only in their own history, but also in that of their servants, relations, connexions, and neighbours,—confirmed by universal experience,—still these are truths which we are very slow to believe, and seldom admit to the fullest extent for any great length of time. To believe that man universally, as he comes into the world, is so totally ruined in his moral nature and affections, as to be altogether earthly and sensual, and moreover that to the subtilty and penetration of a demon, he joins also the malice;—that in the main he is so intensely selfish as to disregard altogether the claims and necessities of others, when they clash with his own,—a wolf for rapine, and a fox for wiles;—that his pride is so horrible as to bid defiance to all adequate description*:—we say to believe all this, is so startling and shocking,

* Many of the deepest thinkers, men had in high reputation in the world of science and letters—for example, Pascal, Locke, Hale, Wilberforce—unequivocally assert, that so deep and total is the depravity of man, that in consequence our whole behaviour is naturally a perpetual constraint—human life nothing but a perpetual illusion, an interchange of falsehood and deception—that man is full of disguise, falsehood, and hypocrisy, towards both himself and others.

his only thought was, where and how he could be usefully employed—how he could effectually make known that religion which is the bond of charity, the curb of evil passions, the consolation of the wretched, the *hope* of the dying. The emolument, although an object with him, as supplying unavoidable expenses, was no object in desire. He was not less thankful for £ 50. per annum than most men would be for £ 500.

Brief and imperfect as our sketch unavoidably is, we have here recorded the sentiments and walk of one to whom neither believer nor infidel could point as to a "*solemn sham*;" of one who, so far from preaching and not practising, eager to grasp some of the good things of the Church,—"*preached righteousness quite as much by the silent eloquence of example,*" as by his words; "*who dared not defile himself with worldly lusts*;"—who lived in the world as one not of the world, and who was, wherever he went, *a witness for God*. He was one not only of noble birth, but what is far better, of noble sentiments and true magnanimity. He drew his sentiments from the heart of Christ; he formed his life by that heavenly word which enlightens the heart, and from which alone fallen man can draw the doctrines of purity and salvation.

This imperfect outline is not given to magnify the creature, but to magnify the grace of God in him. Notwithstanding all the excellencies with which his Maker had endowed him, he was far from perfect; he was still an erring, sinful man, and he felt and lamented it. "*There is no man that liveth and sinneth not.*" No one we ever knew was more impressed with a sense of his personal defects and unworthiness, or felt more deeply every day his need of the atoning grace of Christ; so that his language uniformly was, "*I am constantly learning more of the reality and subtlety of Satan's devices, and the incurable corruption of the natural heart;*" and he drew his hope and consolation, not from anything he had done, not from the virtues of a well-spent life, but solely from the sacrifice and intercession of the Son of God, saying, "*Certainly the secret of happiness and composure is the sense of belonging to Christ.*"

CHAPTER IV.

His opinions on the primary fundamental doctrine of man's depravity, and the absolute necessity of a new creation, in order to real virtue here and felicity hereafter—Baptismal Regeneration unscriptural—The unchangeableness of God's love—The sovereignty of God.

ALTHOUGH the Bible explicitly and repeatedly declares the desperate deceitfulness of the human heart, and the unlimited wickedness of human life, Gen. vi. 5,—Ephes. ii. 1, 2, 3,—Psa. li. 5;—teaching that the radical cause of the many forms of evil, abounding at all times, is to be found in the innate principle of evil in man, Rom. viii. 7;—and although all mankind have the most abundant proofs of these facts, not only in their own history, but also in that of their servants, relations, connexions, and neighbours,—confirmed by universal experience,—still these are truths which we are very slow to believe, and seldom admit to the fullest extent for any great length of time. To believe that man universally, as he comes into the world, is so totally ruined in his moral nature and affections, as to be altogether earthly and sensual, and moreover that to the subtilty and penetration of a demon, he joins also the malice;—that in the main he is so intensely selfish as to disregard altogether the claims and necessities of others, when they clash with his own,—a wolf for rapine, and a fox for wiles;—that his pride is so horrible as to bid defiance to all adequate description*:—we say to believe all this, is so startling and shocking,

* Many of the deepest thinkers, men had in high reputation in the world of science and letters—for example, Pascal, Locke, Hale, Wilberforce—unequivocally assert, that so deep and total is the depravity of man, that in consequence our whole behaviour is naturally a perpetual constraint—human life nothing but a perpetual illusion, an interchange of falsehood and deception—that man is full of disguise, falsehood, and hypocrisy, towards both himself and others.

his only thought was, where and how he could be usefully employed—how he could effectually make known that religion which is the bond of charity, the curb of evil passions, the consolation of the wretched, the *hope* of the dying. The emolument, although an object with him, as supplying unavoidable expenses, was no object in desire. He was not less thankful for £ 50. per annum than most men would be for £ 500.

Brief and imperfect as our sketch unavoidably is, we have here recorded the sentiments and walk of one to whom neither believer nor infidel could point as to a "*solemn sham*;" of one who, so far from preaching and not practising, eager to grasp some of the good things of the Church,—"*preached righteousness quite as much by the silent eloquence of example*," as by his words; "*who dared not defile himself with worldly lusts*;"—who lived in the world as one not of the world, and who was, wherever he went, *a witness for God*. He was one not only of noble birth, but what is far better, of noble sentiments and true magnanimity. He drew his sentiments from the heart of Christ; he formed his life by that heavenly word which enlightens the heart, and from which alone fallen man can draw the doctrines of purity and salvation.

This imperfect outline is not given to magnify the creature, but to magnify the grace of God in him. Notwithstanding all the excellencies with which his Maker had endowed him, he was far from perfect; he was still an erring, sinful man, and he felt and lamented it. "*There is no man that liveth and sinneth not*." No one we ever knew was more impressed with a sense of his personal defects and unworthiness, or felt more deeply every day his need of the atoning grace of Christ; so that his language uniformly was, "*I am constantly learning more of the reality and subtlety of Satan's devices, and the incurable corruption of the natural heart*;" and he drew his hope and consolation, not from anything he had done, not from the virtues of a well-spent life, but solely from the sacrifice and intercession of the Son of God, saying, "*Certainly the secret of happiness and composure is the sense of belonging to Christ*."

CHAPTER IV.

His opinions on the primary fundamental doctrine of man's depravity, and the absolute necessity of a new creation, in order to real virtue here and felicity hereafter—Baptismal Regeneration unscriptural—The unchangeableness of God's love—The sovereignty of God.

ALTHOUGH the Bible explicitly and repeatedly declares the desperate deceitfulness of the human heart, and the unlimited wickedness of human life, Gen. vi. 5,—Ephes. ii. 1, 2, 3,—Psa. li. 5;—teaching that the radical cause of the many forms of evil, abounding at all times, is to be found in the innate principle of evil in man, Rom. viii. 7;—and although all mankind have the most abundant proofs of these facts, not only in their own history, but also in that of their servants, relations, connexions, and neighbours,—confirmed by universal experience,—still these are truths which we are very slow to believe, and seldom admit to the fullest extent for any great length of time. To believe that man universally, as he comes into the world, is so totally ruined in his moral nature and affections, as to be altogether earthly and sensual, and moreover that to the subtilty and penetration of a demon, he joins also the malice;—that in the main he is so intensely selfish as to disregard altogether the claims and necessities of others, when they clash with his own,—a wolf for rapine, and a fox for wiles;—that his pride is so horrible as to bid defiance to all adequate description*:—we say to believe all this, is so startling and shocking,

* Many of the deepest thinkers, men had in high reputation in the world of science and letters—for example, Pascal, Locke, Hale, Wilberforce—unequivocally assert, that so deep and total is the depravity of man, that in consequence our whole behaviour is naturally a perpetual constraint—human life nothing but a perpetual illusion, an interchange of falsehood and deception—that man is full of disguise, falsehood, and hypocrisy, towards both himself and others.

that, notwithstanding very extensive and bitter experience, none are ever found to believe it, who have not had it forced on them by a divine power. Yet this is the primary fact of christianity, and the patent fact of all history, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, ecclesiastical and political, public and domestic, personal and relative. It is sometimes partially driven in upon us in spite of ourselves, by the abominably bad conduct of our servants, both domestic and external; by the appalling wickedness which we meet with incessantly in professional and commercial life, and by the bitter disappointments to which we are unceasingly subject on all sides; still where are those who cordially acknowledge this corruption to anything like its unlimited extent?

Nevertheless the Almighty has as clearly declared it as language can express. But are there no exceptions? Not one; Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12. Not one, when confronted with God, and placed in circumstances of great temptation, has ever appeared exempt from the *black* plague spot. In the eyes of man, some, no doubt, are amiable at times, in particular positions and under favourable circumstances; but this proves nothing. That the evil nature may be varnished—the sore skinned over, we by no means deny. But what do these very persons exhibit when crossed severely? It is no part of the question whether men have not naturally some benevolence and affection towards their fellow-men—the very brutes are capable of this; but it is, how do they stand and feel towards the supreme perfection, the Chief Good? He who rightly demands all, receives nothing. This is the question.

Fallen human nature is not altogether insusceptible of generous emotions towards its own species; but in every case, until Sovereign Power renews and restores the soul, these emotions lie on the surface, and are ever liable to be soon effaced by any strong temptation—often by the feeblest inducements. The cause and extent of man's natural intellectual blindness and moral degradation are such, as to include an obscuration of every faculty and a perversion of every sentiment; and it matters not how great the powers of his

mind may be, they afford no help whatever in leading him to feel and deplore his moral ruin. Hence the most acute and cultivated minds are often the most sceptical and depraved—the most difficult to reach by any argument drawn from either history, Providence, or Scripture. And if it be otherwise, they appear, like Schiller, to be overwhelmed with unutterable dismay when conscience speaks—when the still small voice within whispers the appalling fact, that the soul is about to launch forth, unprepared, into the vast unknown, and must be confronted with Infinite Justice.

This ignominious and deplorable condition of our nature lies at the basis of all sacred history and divine revelation; and now that it is openly denied, even by clergymen of the Established Church, we gladly avail ourselves of an opportunity to publish the convictions of one of the brightest ornaments of that church, and one of the most enlightened, amiable, and thoughtful of men, respecting it. He believed the old nature of man not only totally corrupt, but incurably so; which is agreeable to the Articles of the Church of England, as well as to the Scriptures. The Ninth Article states, that this depravity is “the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam.”—“And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated.” Hence the never-failing lusting of the flesh against the spirit. Nothing can well be more clear and emphatical than his opinion, as stated in the following letter to a lay friend. He says, “I take it that the old nature is never mended, never gets any better; and that to be born again is not to have it altered and amended, but to have a new principle implanted.”

“Ventnor, March 17, 1850.

“MY DEAR SIR,—It will be a great pleasure to receive your tract. If you doubt of any, you may well doubt of me, for I am full of doubt myself. I am constantly learning more of the reality and subtlety of Satan's devices, and the incurable corruption of the natural heart. I take it, the old nature is never mended—never gets any better—and that

to be born again is not to have it altered and amended, but to have a new principle implanted, which needs to be constantly watered and watched by Him who has planted it, but, nevertheless, is sure of never being suffered to wither away and die altogether (Philippians, i. 6); yet there are so many counterfeits of it—plants very like, in many respects, those our Heavenly Father has planted—which are sure to be rooted up: hence fears and doubts. I seek much after that fulness of inward spiritual manifestation you speak of. One right look secures salvation, yet it is beyond nature to see Him till he reveals himself. Certainly the secret of happiness and composure is the sense of belonging to Christ.

“The subjects I wanted you to give me your thoughts upon were, the marks of want of conversion in ministers; and the present defects of evangelical preaching,—both of great moment. How valuable to all generations might be a sound scriptural, searching treatise on the first!

“I have been improving in health all the time I have been here, and have much more respiration in the affected lung. The weather has been, on the whole, unfavourable, and singularly wet and cold for this place. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to be allowed to spend a day or two with you in the summer, if I should be, as is probable, in London in June, and you could receive me.

“Yours, faithfully,

“S. HAY.”

If man by nature were not as blind as he is depraved and wicked, he would universally be sensible of the justness of Mr. Hay’s sentiments, at page 138:—

“The heavy charge lies against us, that we have forsaken God; that if he did not seek us, we should never seek him; that we naturally follow the devices and desires of our own hearts,—content to live without him in the world.

“Who is not by *nature* just such a fool? We should feel a secret gladness to learn that there was no Infinite Rectitude,—no universal Being to notice and punish sin; or we should thank him if he might be for ever absent, or silent, or invisible. Ungodliness is this natural dislike of our Maker,—the wretched wish to be wholly free from his authority. It is seen in the tendency which we all have to put him out of our thoughts, and to live as if we could do well enough without his care, and presence, and blessing.”

To deny the total corruption of mankind is to disbelieve the Bible, and to cut ourselves off from all hope of blessedness. If man is not morally ruined, and a captive, he needs no Redeemer; if not morally lost, he can need no Saviour; and if he needs no Saviour, Christ is an impostor. Such is the inevitable and fearful result of a denial of the doctrine of man's total depravity and ruin! Bishop Butler asserts that the state of society, when penetrated below the surface, proves the world to "*exhibit the idea of A RUIN.*" The revelation from heaven explicitly declares that "*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,*" and that man is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; and it is manifestly wiser heartily to confess the existence of this grievous malady, and at once to apply to the specific remedy, than obstinately to shut our eyes altogether to the certain matter of fact. The knowledge of the disease is half the cure; but what hope of escape can that sinner have who presumptuously denies the existence of the mortal disease, and by consequence the need of remedy?

The conceit which mankind have of a remaining portion of goodness, is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural. For it was impossible, in the nature of things, for the creature, coming as he did perfect out of the hands of his Creator,—perfect in wisdom, righteousness, confidence, and affection, to revolt against him, without losing all these gifts. His disobedience was direct rebellion,—it was high treason against the Majesty of heaven,—it would, if it could, have dragged God from his throne. It was consequently a capital offence; and he instantly incurred the penalty of death. He was not merely driven out of Paradise, but cut off from communion with God. He lost His favour, and with it necessarily his best knowledge of God,—his spiritual knowledge and love. He became an outcast.*

* Mr. Hay's sentiments on this subject, Sermon XIV, p. 131, agree with those of Calvin, who says (*Institutes*, vol. 1, p. 194), "Infidelity was the root of that defection. But hence sprang ambition, pride, and ingratitude, since Adam, by coveting more than was granted, offered an indignity to the Divine goodness, which had so greatly

The best part of the life which man enjoyed in Paradise was the spiritual part of it,—the life and activity of his soul,—of his heart's purest and highest affections, all set on the highest object,—his freedom from all earthly and satanic contamination. If he lost anything from his rebellion,—his high treason, he must necessarily lose this; for high treason is ever held, both in heaven and earth, to be the forfeiture of life and estate. Man did not at once lose his animal life;—the criminal was favoured with a respite in this particular, God having designs of mercy, to be accomplished according to his own good pleasure, in due time. The life of the body was indeed forfeited, but God did not take that immediately; the forfeiture was held in abeyance. So that in fact man forfeited everything by his rebellion against the Sovereignty of heaven,—the only thing not actually taken being his animal life. That was not then taken because God would not make the world one of punishment; but granting immediately on the fall a promise of redemption, he continues to man his forfeited physical life, that he might have space given for repentance, and the enjoyment of the blessings of redemption by Jesus Christ.

But it was morally impossible for a traitor, a rebel, one who flew in the face of God, of Infinite rectitude, still to be in favour with God, to hold fellowship and communion with him. As an assertion of the possibility of this, outrages all our convictions of equity and justice,—all our moral sensibilities, even among men, and much more when carried into the higher and purer region of heaven; it follows as a certain and self-evident truth, that man is naturally without any love to God, or any confidence in him. In other words, he comes into the world cut off from God, and

enriched him. Now it was monstrous impiety that a son of the earth should not be satisfied with being made after the similitude of God, unless he could also be equal to him. If apostacy, which consists in revolting from the government of the Creator, and petulantly rejecting his authority, be a base and execrable crime, it is a vain attempt to extenuate the sin of Adam. The transgression of our first parents was not simple apostacy—they were also guilty of vile reproaches against God, in consenting to the calumnies of Satan, who accused God of falsehood, enmity, and malignity."

therefore wholly depraved and corrupt,—all that he has left to him being his mere animal and intellectual life, and the feeble, fluctuating, natural feelings connected with it.

Hence the fundamental doctrine of man's natural wickedness is as clearly authenticated by the soundest reason, and as fully consistent with true philosophy, as it is expressly declared throughout the Bible. Unless it is possible for a subject to rise in rebellion against his Sovereign, to be guilty of high treason, and yet to enjoy the favour of that Sovereign, and free access to his presence, it is impossible that fallen man can be born otherwise than morally ruined, ignorant, impure, and in helpless misery.

Since, then, the spiritual life of Adam essentially consisted in a union with his Maker, an alienation from Him, was the death of his soul, and that of all his offspring.* Hence arises the necessity for regeneration,—a new birth from heaven, which is given us in Christ, and which is, in fact, the restoration of the lost life of the soul, of spiritual wisdom, sanctity, truth, and righteousness. Man being by nature dead in sin, nothing will reach the exigencies of his condition but life; and for this he is dependent on Sovereign pleasure. God works, by all ordinances and means, according to his pleasure, but not invariably by any.

The figment of "baptismal regeneration" Mr. Hay zealously opposed, as unscriptural, dangerous, and even absurd. He possessed a deep conviction that it is associated in the minds and lives of those who hold it, with many other fatal errors in doctrine, teaching and practice, if it is not, indeed, the fertile source of them. The difference between the high-church notions on baptism, and the teaching thereon in his sermons and letters, he regarded as no mere difference in terms, but as *vital* and *fundamental* differences.

Conversion, in his view, is the entire, radical change from guilt and condemnation to righteousness and pardon,—from sin to holiness; with which a sinner is blessed when apprehended by God, led in faith to

* Calvin's Institutes, bk. 1, p. 194.

Christ, and renewed in the spirit of his mind. He strenuously taught, as the Bible teaches throughout, that men, whether baptized or not baptized, living or not living under christian teaching and privileges, whether enlightened or unenlightened, are dead in trespasses and sins,—far off from God and hope (1 John v.),—until the Divine Spirit has taken hold of their inmost centres with that mighty and effectual grasp, which at once deeply humbles, and renews, and sanctifies.

In a letter to the editor, dated from Westridge, Ryde, March 12, 1851, he says :—

“ How thankful we have reason to be for the Privy Council’s decision ! but how much to be desired that the Church of England could be further cleared from the imputation of tolerating such a perversion of God’s truth, that baptism is necessarily and invariably the channel for conveying spiritual life to the dead !

“ Have you seen a little book detailing the last hours of an eminent man in your profession, Dr. Gordon, of Hull ? You would be greatly pleased with it, written by Newman Hall, his son-in-law.

“ We have spent a very quiet and pleasant winter here. interrupted only by two short trips to London, on my ward’s business. I am expecting to go to Norfolk, to marry one of my nieces, next month ;—if so, I shall look in on you in the way back. Mrs. ——— has been much the better for the quiet she has had. I have been favoured with uninterrupted health, and the cold of January did not at all affect me.

“ Believe me, yours, truly and affectionately,
“ S. HAY.”

Man’s ruin is a most painful subject ; but is there no light and life sent down from heaven into this ocean of darkness and death—no honey dropped into these bitter waters ? Yes. What is it ? The perfect recovery of man, as a believer in the Son of God, by the renewing and sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. If man absolutely lost everything as a spiritual being, in the fall of Adam, he gains everything with advantage, as such, in his union with Christ (1 Cor. x. 21, 22, 23, —Rom. iv. 20). Yes ; he gains the highest step in the creation, for he is now made “ *a partaker of the Divine nature.* ”—2 Peter i. 4. All the promises are absolutely

certain in Christ. There is no yea and nay; no more peradventures; no contingencies here (2 Cor. i. 20.) Man was ruined by himself, but is saved by God. If the ruin in the one case was total—the recovery in the other is complete. Man cast himself out of paradise, and down to hell, but God raises him up to heaven (1 John iv. 15). Man cast away his garment of righteousness, but God covers him with another robe, brighter and more perfect than what he lost. Not that he might again be absolutely put to the trial of standing or falling. No. His state is still in a sense probationary, but the Lord now takes the matter into his own hands; and who shall prevail against him? (Rom. viii. 33, 34). This new righteousness carries with it strength, and the man, although complete again, is no longer so in himself; he is complete in another; (Colos. ii. 10), and He is one higher than the heavens —“*the Son of God with power*” (Rom. i. 4), to keep all that is committed to him. The righteousness he first possessed was that of a perfect man; what he now enjoys is the righteousness of God (Rom. iii. 21). Here is the ample guarantee for the stability of the ransomed race. Their lofty destiny is heaven, nearest the throne; and thither Jesus has undertaken to conduct them. It shall therefore be accomplished.

The ransomed race are consequently authorized and invited to rejoice in a connexion not only lofty and glorious, but likewise indissoluble. They are made one with the Son of God, having been not only quickened, but “*quickened together with Christ,*” Ephes. ii. 5. They are no longer strangers and foreigners, but “*of the household of God,*” destined to enjoy an inheritance, never to be spent, and never forfeited.

“Such favours are beyond degree,
And worthy of a God.”

The great promise of the new covenant is not so much one of this or that benefit, as an explicit promise of life, everlasting life (2 Timothy, i. 1). “*This is the promise that he has promised us, eternal life*” (1 John, ii. 25); which necessarily implies and insures final perseverance

and blessedness. "*I give unto them everlasting life,*" (John, x. 28). To whom? To those whom he hath chosen, who are deeply humbled for their sin and corruption, the dreadful inward evils of their nature, who hate them, fight against them, and overcome them. This is the chosen generation. "*They shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand,*" (John x. 28). "*I will never leave thee, no, never forsake thee.*"

"Zion's friend in nothing alters,
Though all others may and do;
His is love that never falters—
Always to its object true.
Happy Zion!
Crown'd with mercies ever new."

This heart-reviving doctrine Mr. Hay fully embraced and preached, for proof of which we refer to his sermon on "*The Work of Grace never fails,*" page 62. "These blessings," he says, "once given, are irrevocable gifts; they never will be recalled," page 60. "If God lays the foundation, without doubt he means to erect a building upon it." "When God gives his Spirit to work holiness, he means to give eternal life; the Spirit of his grace is the earnest of that inheritance," p. 64, also p. 92; and he traces these consolatory truths to their never-failing fountain in the infinite goodness and love of God, and the unchangeableness of the Divine nature, p. 59 and 60.

Do any object that these statements are extravagant?
Of God's love

"We form
Extravagant conception to be just:
Conception unconfined wants wings to reach it."

The redeemed is a child of love—

"Even angels see
On earth a bounty not indulged on high;
And downward look for heaven's superior praise!"

All these immense appointments come by Jesus Christ,
"*To the intent that now, unto the principalities and
powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church*"

the manifold wisdom of God."—Ephes. iii. 10. And they are bestowed in the way of truth and righteousness, of rectitude and humility. God is a holy being. "*Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*" The sanctification of the nature of the redeemed, therefore, ever accompanies the other high favours of heaven; and the believer's realization of these blessings is usually in proportion to the close keeping of his heart, and the humility and strictness of his life. It is utterly vain for any one to aspire to any part of this blessedness who does not in secret mourn over his corruptions and sins;—who does not struggle steadily and mightily against every form and degree of sin, hating the foul spirit and practices common in society, and who is not active in diffusing costly benefits among his fellows; who does not, indeed, make these inward and outward exercises the main business of his life.

Christianity is a transformation—a new life breathed into the soul of man from heaven, sometimes instrumentally by one means, sometimes by another. In the conversion of a sinner, Christ comes with a blessing in both hands. He at once justifies and sanctifies; he humbles and elevates. He brings God and man together, never more to part. Here is the stable ground and sufficient reason for solid comfort and hope; and hence fear may be utterly banished from the mind. The sun rises never again to set. Blessed doctrine! Salvation is thus shown to be as far removed from any contingency on man's doings, on the one hand, as it is from countenancing laxity or licentiousness, on the other. Here alone we find a religion gratuitous, yet holy,—humbling, yet elevating,—peaceful, enduring; by which boasting is wholly excluded; where God receives all the glory, and man all the benefit.

"Ev'ry human tie may perish;
 Friend to friend unfaithful prove;
 Mothers cease their own to cherish;
 Heaven and earth at last remove;
 But no changes
 Can attend Jehovah's love."

Nevertheless, man judges of God by himself;—the guilty, selfish worm, in part measures infinite beneficence by his own scanty measure; and therefore the unchangeable love of the Almighty to his people is one of the last truths he is brought cordially to embrace. He can believe anything sooner than a love which "*neither knows measure nor end.*" That the Creator is a being of infinite power, and wisdom, and knowledge—of infinite rectitude, and even of mercy—he does not much hesitate to admit; but that God is likewise infinite and unchangeable in love, in pure, disinterested affection, to those sinners whom He is pleased to smile upon, is a truth which he cannot believe. It is so entirely diverse from every thing he sees in men, that he is utterly at a loss respecting it. He might have been throughout his life a witness to mighty powers, indomitable energy, brilliant and versatile talents, multifarious learning, and amazing acuteness in mankind; and now and then he has even seen immense sacrifices, tender friendship, and compassion; but pure, disinterested, ardent, and unchangeable love—love to strangers, to dastardly, insulting enemies, to proud rebels (Ezekiel, xix. 2—14)—is a virtue he has never seen, and therefore it is the last quality he believes in. There is, indeed, the undying affection of the mother to her child; but that is love to a part of herself. It is not love to an enemy—it cannot be denominated disinterested affection. In the friendship and affection of man and woman, how many painful changes he has seen and experienced! How suspicious, and cold, and condemnatory have many of those become who were once so warm, and confiding, and satisfied; and that, too, among our own relations! No wonder, then, that such a love as Christ's has ever been far away out of man's sight. He has no apprehension of it. It is not to be found on earth; he therefore thinks it cannot exist in heaven.

This may partly account for the very tardy admission which even real christians give to the high and consolatory doctrine of the unchangeable love of Jehovah to his chosen inheritance. It involves so certain and immense a blessedness, that the human mind shrinks

back from that very attribute which ought to attract it with irresistible force; and it has divided even the ransomed race into two great sections. While one cordially embraces the precious truth expressed by the poet, in the words "*the arms of everlasting love*," the other finds it impossible to avoid transposing the word everlasting, and can sing only of "*the everlasting arms of love*;"* as if the natural attributes of Jehovah could be more certainly fixed and unchangeable than his moral perfections. How few there are who can confidently rest their weary head on this soft and immovable pillow! How few who are enabled to appropriate to themselves the love of Christ, and thus to find the great secret of living contented, and dying peaceful and happy! Christians do not question any attribute of Jehovah excepting this, and yet he again and again assures the redeemed,—"*The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed.*" His unchangeableness is our immutable security. Jacob was the head of his race; they were all seminally and virtually included in him, and the promises made to, and fulfilled in him, are made to, and fulfilled to them. They are absolute promises, the sum of them being—"I will never leave thee till I have done all that I have spoken to thee of."—See page 59—64.

The goodness and love of Jehovah must be in every sense equal to his greatness and wisdom; but the chief reason why we taste so little of this love, and are so far from an assurance of its unalterable nature, is the distance at which we live from him in meditation and secret prayer, in renunciation of the world, and in the life of faith. We rejoice in the activity of the christian community of our days, and are thankful that it has pleased the Almighty to diffuse his truth to the ends of the earth; but we must not forget that this very activity may be a snare to us, and actually is a snare. If, considering the present necessities of men, we do not live too much abroad; yet, looking at

* Wesley's Hymns, No. 227, p. 220.

our own frailty and needs, we live too little at home. Nothing can supply the neglect of secret duties—of abstraction from the world—of frequent meditation, and closet prayer—of a studious preparation for death. Nothing bows us down and debilitates the soul like earthly attachments and passions—earnest care and anxiety about any outward thing or person. To desire only God; to seek only God, is the secret of liberty and peace. We thrive in our inward experience of the love of Jesus, just in proportion as we thrive in these precious means of fellowship with him. If we would walk in high places, and be fed with this part of the heritage of Jacob, and have, with Mrs. Rowe, our “heavenly prospects gay and transporting;” or, if with Leighton, we would long to be gone from this “weary, weary world,” then we must, like them, be resolved on a retreat, at least in heart, from the world, and on cultivating a willingness and desire to die. Mrs. Rowe says, in a letter to her mother, in her “Miscellaneous Works,” vol. 2, p. 190—

“I am resolved on an absolute retreat from the world, of whose vanity heaven has effectually convinced me, in the breach of the tenderest engagement of life.

“I have now no fears or hopes that regard this world; and as to the next, I thank God, and ascribe it entirely to his goodness, all my prospects are gay and transporting; and I am only waiting here, like the hireling, for the close of the evening, which is drawing on apace, and then I shall lie down to rest.”

Mr. Hay’s views were ever raised to the brighter world above; and such intimations of the habitual state of his mind as are found in the following letter, were frequently given to his correspondents.

“To Mrs. Young, Westridge, Isle of Wight.

(no date.)

“DEAR MRS. YOUNG,—We have been thinking of your guests, and pitying them in having lighted on the island at such a time as this. How depressing is all this rain, and wind, and clouded sky, so unlooked for in “the leafy month of June!” But we cannot be surprised at any changes and chances in this mortal life. There will be no changeable

weather or ungenial climate in the new earth. Let us but gain a home there, and we shall never have cause to complain on that score. Meantime, in a world where most things are out of order, it is no wonder the climate thereof should be so too. It also will be mended and settled at the times of the restitution of all things."

In the exercise of his sovereign pleasure, God often passes by thousands of lofty genealogy and the proudest claims, and fixes on some of the lowest, least, and most despised among men. Why is this? To show that his love is a mighty river, the streams whereof are designed to make glad many outcasts; and that his rule of favour differs altogether from that of the world. Hence he holds out hope to the meanest, and rebukes the pride and presumption of rank, and riches, and worldly authority. The Sovereignty of God, and his display of this attribute in the calling and regeneration of his people, was a doctrine constantly enforced by Mr. Hay. "*No man can receive anything unless it be given him from heaven.*" (See Sermon XIII., p. 117). He says (p. 190), "The question of our recovery in our hopeless ruin lies in his sovereign pleasure. What will it please him to do? The world's fate hangs in suspense upon the answer."* Man is naturally ever looking for some motive within, why God should love him, and in his impenetrable and awful blindness, he thinks he has not far to look in order to find. But the motive is solely in God himself. He draws it from the unchangeable fountain of his own love—his own infinitely gracious nature; and salvation is all of gratuitous mercy. It is a sovereign bestowment. Mr. Hay attached supreme importance to the fact that conversion originates in the good-will, the boundless grace of God (Gal. i. 15,—2 Timothy i. 9). He rightly taught that we should never have loved Him, unless He had first loved us (John iv. 19); never have sought Him, if He had not first sought us. "Brethren," he says (Sermon VI. p. 58), "those of you who are

* One of rare Christian experience, and a deep thinker, Thomas Adam, the self-denying rector of Winttingham, forcibly says—"Man's salvation is as much the gift of God, and the work of Christ, as his life and being."

converted, when you were so, you were conquered. You contended against God every step of the way; as long as you could, you stood out and resisted, till overpowered by the gracious workings of the Holy Spirit."

He instructively refers to these influences, and likewise to his spiritual conflicts, with other subjects of moment, in the following letter. A few remarks had been made by his correspondent on the benefits likely to accrue from avoiding the common practice of using a Collect (beautiful as the Collects are) before sermon, and substituting an extempore prayer suited to the particular circumstances of the times and congregation. Reference was made to Herbert's striking prayer before sermon; and in proof of the blessing which God gives to a free and distinguishing method of prayer, the correspondent quoted some remarkable circumstances mentioned in the *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Fairclough*, some time Rector of Keddington (1660), of whom it is said—

"He left in his Diary the names of some hundreds who had owned him to be their spiritual father. Some of them declared that their first serious impressions were excited by *his prayer before sermon*, in which he introduced confessions and petitions suited to the cases and characters of such hearers as he supposed to be chargeable with particular sins."

He expresses himself to have been sensible of difficulty in following so good an example; but we are disposed to think that the difficulty did not lie where he imagined, but resulted from his own modesty. He was, perhaps, in such points, too backward to depart from established rules.

The sermon referred to in the following letter, the reader will find at page 117.

"Lyndhurst, March 3, 1851.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I must beg you to excuse my long silence after your last kind and interesting letter. I have an inveterate repugnance to letter-writing, and seldom can bring myself to take up my pen except when obliged, unless to write to friends whom I am unwilling to lose sight of. Letter-writing, when really letter-writing, takes up much

time; and I find ample occupation, though having no stated and distinct one. I am very well in health, except a cough, troublesome at times, which damp weather always occasions; but by means of my new voice, I do not find any inconvenience from publicly officiating. Yesterday I was preaching on Abraham's call, and his obedience to it, in the second evening lesson. How marked in it is the sovereignty of divine grace and authority, and how powerful its effect! Contrast it with so many expensive means lavished in vain—the divine dealings in the wilderness—with the Jews, by prophets, &c.—with Pharaoh, by miracles—and then the mysterious power that went with the simple words, '*Follow me,*' addressed to Andrew, Peter, &c. Without it Abraham would have treated the call as Pharaoh did,—'*Who is the Lord?*' How plain is God's right to command—our inability to obey without this secret call—yet our inexcusableness in neglecting to do so! In the second part I dwelt on the venture of Abraham's faith. It is altogether a rich and fruitful subject. What a venture that was!—and our faith must be of the same quality, or it will not be true.

I creep on as well as I can, feeling very strongly the body of death. I have three special innate corruptions, distinct in themselves, and with one or other I have frequently to do battle; and when one is stirring, the others seem quite dead and motionless; but they all have their turn. What should we do if it had been written, '*If ye mortify the mind and flesh, ye shall live*' without its being added, through the spirit? I seldom have the means of finding out whether my weak, imperfect labours, lead to any result. I would fain believe they have some. It is but a little part we each act in God's great scheme, and a small amount of real good fruit is recompense enough for a life's labours.

"Though I do not preach actually extempore, I feel the force of your remarks on speaking with the eye, and practice them, by acquainting myself so thoroughly with my sermon as to be independent, to a great degree, of my paper. Thanks for your hints on prayer before sermon. The only difficulty is, to be sufficiently concise and short in taking so large a field. My friends have found a house in Berkshire (Job, xlii. 5, 6). Will you table that before the mercy-seat; and whenever you think of me in your prayers, make *that* the subject of them. What a blessing a full, deep experience of that!"

CHAPTER V.

1846—1853.

His opinions of modern theological writers and preachers—
Opposition to all speculative and semi-popish theology—
Necessity of self-abasement and mortification of natural
habits—Admiration of Love's Sermons and Letters—
Boston's and Fraser's diary and experience—Irving's
heresy—Danger of mystifying the doctrines of Scripture,
among evangelical ministers—Authors and promulgators
of pernicious and blasphemous conceits condemned by
him as without hope—Coleridge—Letters—Manchester
Education Bill.

A REMARKABLE difference is evident between the feeling and teaching of many of the modern evangelical clergy and dissenting ministers, and those of the sixteenth century. The former appear ever ready to consider how close people may advance towards the edge of a precipice without falling over; how much deadly poison they may drink without being destroyed;—while the latter were wisely intent on showing how possible it is to go near to the gates of heaven, and yet be carried away to hell. The former look like those who are anxious to raise a fair superstructure, or to acknowledge it at once when visible;—the latter would be classed only with such as mainly regard the foundation, absolutely refusing to think the building of any value whatever, unless the foundation is first proved to be sound and good. The latter realize steadfastly the Infinite Rectitude and Holiness of the divine nature, and the immense difference in the tempers and dispositions of believers and unbelievers, at the same time that they rejoice in the provisions of mercy found in the gospel; the former

dwell so entirely on the mercy and grace of God in Christ,—and on what is called the doctrine of justification by faith, as too much to lose sight of God's Infinite Holiness, and of the only sure test of discipleship supplied by the renunciation of all vainglory, self-denial and abasement,—by a mortified spirit. The former are all for what is termed gospel work; the latter are first for a thorough law work on the heart,—the rarest thing in the world to see;—convinced that the former class of teachers are no better than deceivers until they have experienced this deep law work on the conscience, and that those who do not most strenuously insist on it, begin at the wrong end.

We regret to perceive that many able christian ministers, for whom we entertain a sincere respect, lean too much towards this tendency of our times. They are not sufficiently careful and courageous to insist on fundamental doctrines, in their influence on opinion as well as practice; and in this sense to separate the chaff from the wheat. They do not resolutely and firmly maintain the purifying influence of true faith,—as purifying and preserving from all capital and pestilential errors. They incautiously give countenance to the opinion that people may pursue the most erratic, extravagant, senseless, unevangelical, yea, blasphemous course, and yet be at bottom all right. The old puritan clergy gave no quarter to such opinions and courses as these.

Mr. Hay, ever alive to “the astonishing resemblance to be found between counterfeit religion and the genuine,—between a rotten heart and a sound one,” page 101, laboured unceasingly in the spirit of the old puritan preachers, to warn his hearers of the danger of self-deception. Who can read his description, at pages 13 and 101, of the lengths to which man may, unprofitably, go in religious knowledge, profession, and practice, without being impressed with the great facilities existing for making a wrong estimate both of ourselves and of others? At page 111, his language is—

“There are fatal facilities for passing a false judgment on ourselves. Our self-love, indolence, pride, carelessness,—supply them. You may be decaying in bodily health, and

be quite unconscious that an insidious disease is working its way, while no symptoms but those of health are as yet apparent; ten times more open to deception are you about your soul's health. In that department of your being, the spiritual part, there is not a grace of the Holy Ghost but has its counterfeit, so like the original, that we need to look closely before we decide; what has the look of grace, and conversion, and godliness, may so easily be mistaken for the reality, and so long pass unsuspected, that it is needful to examine closely. You know a forged bank note may be made so like a genuine one that it may baffle even a minute scrutiny: a very experienced eye alone is able to detect the imposition. It is just so here. False christianity can so dexterously and skilfully imitate the true, that a passing glance perceives no difference; yes, a keen observer even may be deceived."

Against all the heresies of both a speculative and a semi-popish theology, he took his stand on the infallible authority of the Scriptures,—rejecting, entire, all the inventions and traditions of men, and yielding no confidence whatever to the church standing, learning, eloquence, or apparent piety of any one whose doctrines are repugnant to Holy Scripture. He knew that to be a moral, zealous, enlightened, and in appearance even a pious man, is widely different from being a christian; and although men spoke or wrote with the tongues or pens of angels, if they contravened or mystified the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, he was resolved to denounce both them and their writings. He did not speak out on such subjects quite so boldly as Howell's, or those noble men the Haldanes, being naturally of a more quiet, easy temperament, but he did not think and preach the less decidedly. He was deeply sensible to what amazing lengths man may go in religious knowledge, zeal, activity, moving eloquence, and seeming earnestness, and yet after all be nothing more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; so much so indeed, that he seemed, from the general style of his sermons, ever to have had before his mind the fearful histories of Lot's wife,—Judas,—and the foolish virgins,—portions of Scripture which he feelingly expounded, but which are too little, and too superficially, considered in our day.

Mr. Hay refers, in some of his letters, to the defects in evangelical preaching and writings, a subject on which he thought much and closely. He considered, and, as we think, rightly, that ordinarily and principally they fail, *first*, in not being discriminating and searching, not sufficiently separating the chaff from the wheat; and *secondly*, in not being sufficiently experimental and practical. He was exceedingly fond of the old puritan writers, whose exact discrimination and very searching and experimental methods of writing and preaching he found most entirely to his own taste and experience; modern theology being, for the most part, rather superficial than deep, and too exclusively theoretical. Being ever alive to the dangers of self-deception, both in himself and others,—knowing the dangerous rocks that jut out on each side of the river of life; and that we are arrived at a period of the world's history in which we seem driven close upon *the rapids*; he felt keenly the extreme necessity of frequent and explicit warnings, accurately embodying fundamental principles, and enforced by demanding the most careful attention to inward power, and to the practical duties of life. For proofs of his entertaining these views we need only refer to some of his sermons herewith published.

The doctrines of the vicarious atonement of Jesus, and of justification by faith in Him, are precious and all-important; but they are only a small portion of divine truth, and are, indeed, but a part of what is properly called the gospel. The defects of evangelical preaching in our day may not be found in these doctrines,—the naked theory is clearly stated. They consist rather in neglecting the forcible exposition of the primary doctrine of man's total corruption; and in overlooking the great matters of inward experience and practical life, of holy tempers and heavenly dispositions; of self-abasement and renunciation of the world; not sufficiently insisting on them as essential parts of the christian character,—not sufficiently dwelling on "the great mystery of christianity," as it has been expressively called, "the crucifixion of self."

We may, by the study of the best authors, easily

obtain clear notions of the theory of christianity ; but is not the point in which we so evidently and considerably fail, that of practice—that of relinquishment of the world—of personal crucifixion? We may be quite correct on the doctrine of the one-sufficient offering once made as an atonement for sin, and of the complete justification of the sinner by faith in that atonement ; but do we not still fail in the matter of following Christ as an example? We would gladly rest on his death as the satisfaction for our sins ; but do we in truth drink into his spirit, and tread in the steps of his life? In our quietest moments, if we look calmly into ourselves, to our tempers and general course,—our motives and ends,—our greatest sources of inward disquiet ; do we not find that the great flaw of our existence is an unmortified spirit,—that which is altogether at variance with the Spirit of Christ? And if we suffer from ignorance of divine truth, especially in its higher departments, even then, is there not something within all of us, which whispers to the excellency of self-renunciation, and points to it as the secret of strength and solid peace? If a man is dead to self and the world, what can move him?

We may have all knowledge, and know many mysteries, and yet every blast moves and terrifies us ; but let us be desirous to be little and unknown,—let us resolutely set ourselves to shun honour and bear contempt,—let us strive mightily to live each day as though it were the last, preparing ourselves not for much consolation but for great sufferings,—let us cultivate a willingness to die ; in a word, let us follow the life of Christ, and what then can move us? We then live contented with our lot, and draw a never-failing source of peace from the conviction that this is the worst we shall ever suffer. If there is not much worth living for, we feel there is something worth dying for.

If we could dispense with this self-crucifixion, as a most essential element of christian life, we could readily find multitudes of sound believers ; for we have not far to go to meet with persons of fair moral life and good abilities, sometimes of brilliant talents, *acquainted with the theory of christianity*, at least with

much of that theory,—persons who can, to a certain extent, write and speak well upon it. But when we search for this grand characteristic, this precious jewel, this modest, humble, retiring spirit, this self-abasement, we are ordinarily compelled to look far and wide ere we light upon the favoured few. How great a thing it is to “*count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord,*”—to have that mind in us which was also in him,—to make ourselves of no reputation; to be heartily willing to be as a broken vessel, “*a dead man out of mind,*”—really to quit the world in heart, aim, and end, before we quit it in person!

Sin is a struggle of the creature to tear itself away from God, and make a divinity of *self*. Self-seeking is the universal root of sin. Self-renunciation, self-abandonment, is then a struggle of man to unite himself to God; it is the main principle of all acceptable obedience, the great proof of faith, and of love to the Supreme Perfection. In its exercise man ceases to be the slave of sin, and corresponding with the exact degree of that exercise the inward discomposure which never fails to agitate the slave, is escaped, and peace and inward satisfaction fill the breast.

The whole of Mr. Hay's deportment and conversation evinced how sensible he was of the excellency of the life described by Paul in Galat. v. 24, and Philip. iii. 8, 9, 10, and he particularly refers to it in some of the letters introduced into this volume. In the sermon *On Self Examination*, p. 118, he says, in reference to the distinctive marks of personal religion, and in conformity with the sentiments now advanced, “One of the most complete and satisfactory tests scripture supplies, is the denial and mortification of natural habits. *“They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.”* They are not Christ's in whom any of these affections and lusts, any one of the lusts of the flesh or mind strays and governs. On this point you should anxiously examine yourself, should narrowly inspect all your habits, courses and tempers, to ascertain whether you do not yield yourself a servant to sin, in any of its shapes,—do not hide some iniquity, and

consciously, or unconsciously, walk contrary to the guidance and authority of the Spirit. The Apostle says to the christian,—in Rom. vi. 14,—“*Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*”

He suffered from a most severe attack of hæmoptysis about 1850, and a decoction of linseed having been recommended to him by one of his correspondents, he notices it in the following letter, giving, at the same time, some insight into the habitual frame of his mind and his lofty aims.

“Lyndhurst, Monday,
(no date, but in 1850).

“MY DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your letter, which was a great refreshment. In answer to your question, I never had an attack of hemorrhage before, or the least spitting of blood. I have begun taking the linseed tea on your recommendation, and I think it relieves the cough. My attendant is only the village doctor, who has acted chiefly under Dr. — directions; but he understands nothing of the chest, so I hope (D.V.) to go next week to the Island, and see Dr. Martin at Ventnor, and have the lung examined by him. I also want to learn the causes of such congestion as there appears to have been, and the means of guarding against it. I had not the least suspicion of it, feeling perfectly well up to the moment when the hemorrhage began. I hope, too, that change of air, if the weather should be fine, then, will be useful. I am much the better for getting out since Wednesday, though I have still very little breath. How graciously designed are these shakings of the earthly house, proving it too frail and perishable to expect much satisfaction or long continuance in it, and yet “*my soul cleaveth to the dust.*” The natural averseness and disaffection towards the things which God hath prepared in the invisible world for them that love him, namely, the sight of his glory and participation in it, is not easily removed and cured. But the Spirit *can* cure it, and make the soul savour, and relish, and long for what the flesh is utterly indifferent to; and this I reach after. It is only of those who reckon themselves strangers and pilgrims, and have an aim beyond this earth, that God is not ashamed to be called their God; but your experience must be that of all such, more or less. It is hard, surrounded by things seen and temporal, to realize and aim at those which are unseen and eternal.

“*But one thing I feel very strongly,—it would never do*

to give up and despair. I will keep my hands stretched out and my eyes looking upward, relying on the goodness of the nature of God, his having no pleasure in a sinner's death, the faithfulness of his offers, the goodwill and condescension of the Redeemer, who thinks it worth while to open his arms even to me, and would admit me to behold his glory. Before we can get there, the new creature must grow up, and the old man be subdued. May the Spirit carry on this work in us by whatever methods he sees necessary, and may we have grace to understand and acquiesce in them."

He strongly recommended the memoirs of Fraser of Brea,* and Thomas Boston, and the letters and sermons of Dr. Love, with publications of a similar discriminating class, such as those of Calvin and

* Fraser, of Brea, found effectual relief, under his spiritual distresses, from close meditation on some of the great truths already pressed on the reader's attention in chap. iv.; and for the benefit of the inexperienced reader, we subjoin a few of his remarks:—

"That which did me most good was, a fuller discovery of the nature of the covenant of grace—meditations on the Gospel—on Christ's gentle nature—as likewise some particular promises that were, by the operation of the Spirit, very clearly applied. Among which these were the chief:—1 Tim. i. 15, '*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.*' O, what a degree of life and sweetness was discovered in that one word, one evening after supper! John iii. 17, '*God sent not his Son to condemn the world!*' And that word! Pa. lxxv. 5, '*God is the confidence of all the ends of the earth; and he justifies the ungodly. They that know thee will put their trust in thee.*' And that scripture, 1 Cor. i. 30, '*God hath made Christ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*' And that in John, xv. 16, '*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.*' From which these truths were made clear to me—

"1st. That nothing in man is the first ground of hope or of despair.

"2d. That the whole ground of our hope is in Christ alone.

"3d. That sinners have right to absolute promises; or the first ground of faith is an absolute promise.

"4th. Such is the nature of Christ, that he only came to shew mercy—hath no wrath or law—came not to condemn—'*fury is not in me*;'—and that it is as unreasonable to fear condemnation from Christ as to expect cold water from fire; and, therefore, whosoever knows him cannot but believe in him; and that there is nothing in Christ but what is matter of joy and comfort.

"5th. All salvation depends on Christ's good-will only, and every thing relating thereto, all which is made ours by faith.

"6th. That God himself is the drawer-up of the sinner's security

Edwards; assured that they exhibit the character, exercises, and conflicts of the genuine Israelite, and that the marrow of divinity is to be found in them.

Dr. Love was a Presbyterian minister, of very eminent talents, and great vigour and depth of mind, who exercised his ministry for some years in London, and subsequently in Glasgow and Greenock. He lived a very holy life; and his excellency as a preacher consisted in bringing the Word of God to bear with singular light and energy on the secret perverters of the Gospel, and in the edification of true saints. He was a most able expositor of the thorough unsoundness and dark rebellion of that class of writers on religion, which we have referred to towards the close of this chapter. He considered them, in spite of all their talents, fine thoughts and reputation, to be perverters of the faith. He was cotemporary with Dr. Chalmers; and on one occasion being requested to fill the pulpit of his more eloquent, but not more spiritually experienced friend, in Glasgow, when the people entered, and, with surprise, saw Dr. Love in the pulpit, many of them hurriedly left the church; on which Dr. L. rose and cried out, "Let all the chaff fly off, and then we will commence the worship of God," which had the effect of settling the remaining portion of the chaff, as no more flew off. We lent his "Letters" to a very devout and experienced minister in London, a deep thinker, who returned them with this high encomium, — "*He asked for water, and she gave him milk; and*

for heaven and for blessedness. *Christ is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, &c. 'I have given him for a covenant for the people.'*

"7th. That the Lord bestows this right gratuitously and absolutely, which free promise is the ground of faith, and not the purchase of faith.

"8th. That nothing destroys but unbelief, in not pressing the Lord with these promises; all which are comprehended in that one word, '*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came to save sinners.*' Here now was I fixed on a rock that was able to bide all storms. Is Christ, then, the ground of all my hopes? and do my hopes depend wholly on Him? and have I a promise that all will be well? and is this promise that to which I must take myself? and is this promise given freely of God? Surely, then, though I see nothing in myself but what is matter of grief, sorrow, and despair, yet here is matter of hope."

she brought forth butter on a lordly dish." An outline of the comprehensive general subjects of his sermons is presented in the following extracts, from pages 114, 122, and 424 of his "Letters;" which afford also some insight into the unusual breadth and depth of his religious perceptions and experience.

"I am more and more convinced, from the study of the Scripture, and of human nature, that the great secret of true religion lies here, in forming right ideas of the intrinsic independent glory of the Divine Being, and of the holiness, justice, and sovereignty of God; and then in connecting these primary views of the Deity, with the goodness of God to his innocent and pure creatures, and his sovereign mercy in the recovery of guilty and lost beings, through the mediation of Christ. Nothing, indeed, can set the soul right here but the light and power of regenerating grace: for the soul, while unrenewed, sees these things through a delusive medium, and either accounts them of little consequence, or obstinately fights and struggles against them."

In a letter to a friend, in whose highest welfare he felt sincere interest, he says—

"I hope you have not only heard, but felt and relished, in your attendance on my labours, the intrinsic excellence and beauty of the nature and moral perfections of God, to be regarded distinctly, though not separately, from the consideration of our benefit and advantage thereby;—the nature of our sin and depravity, as to be traced up to an opposition or enmity against the holy nature and perfections of God, viewed not merely as being hostile to us, but in relation to their very excellency, being distasteful to sinful beings;—the necessity of a real change of nature in this respect, as being essential to that compliance with the Gospel method of salvation, which constitutes saving faith;—the wide difference between notional ideas on the one hand, and on the other of spiritual views of the mysterious scheme of redemption;—the intrinsic glory of the godhead of Jesus Christ, and the peculiar beauty of holiness in his human nature, united with his godhead, as giving value to his obedience and sufferings;—and the exalting, transcendent sweetness and preciousness of his love;—the importance of seeking after seasons of intimate, sensible communion with the Lord, and of constant watchfulness over the heart, and of an attentive observation of the approaches and withdrawals of the Spirit of grace, and of watchfulness as to out-

ward conduct ;—the boundless room there is for progress in faith, purity, and spiritual delight, and in enlarged benevolence both as to the good and the bad around us.”

In another letter, after lamenting over the remaining “weakness, unbelief, security and self-righteousness,” of which he was conscious, Dr. Love affords us some view into the state of his inner life, in the following extract :—

“My victory over darkness, error, enmity, and sensuality is becoming more perfect. I am beginning to learn to look death in the face with a triumphant superiority to all its horrors. My everlasting victory and triumph are hastening on apace. The thoughts of forsaking all in this world, and of being wholly swallowed up in God, in his praise and in the enjoyment of him, are becoming daily more familiar, and losing their wildness and strangeness. My soul is beginning to assume its superiority to the body and its external senses. The external vicissitudes of day and night, change of place, &c., make little impression on me :—my great business is within. I look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. I am habitually a stranger on this earth. I find that the true liberty and rest of the soul consists in being weaned from the corrupt, inordinate love of created things, and in being captivated and ravished with the uncreated glory of the Godhead.”

The standard of divine truth has not unfrequently been lowered, and an injury inflicted on it in many ways, by the incautious, seemingly charitable, but in reality unwarrantable concessions on the point of personal piety, made to those who have propagated the most unsound and pestilential doctrines. We have no wish to dwell long on the several points of view from which this painful subject might be considered ; but although very distressing, it is no less important, and therefore we think, by God’s blessing, that it may not be without honour to him and benefit to men, if we examine, in illustration, the manner in which the frightful heresy of Christ’s sinful human nature has sometimes been treated by ministers themselves sound in the faith.

Jesus came as perfect God and perfect man. This is a fundamental doctrine of the christian faith, and to

believe it rightly is necessary to everlasting salvation. It is not only the doctrine of the Established Church, but, what is far more to the purpose, that of the Inspired Record. John Newton used to assert that we cannot be right in the rest, unless we think rightly of Christ. We cannot then understand on what grounds those who do not believe this rightly, are received as "deluded brethren." If they are brethren in the faith, there is an end to all distinction between believers and unbelievers; for if those who disbelieve the doctrine of absolute perfection in Christ, both as God and man, are not unbelievers, we know not what unbelief is; and if disbelief of this primary doctrine is incompatible with a right belief in Christ, then they cannot be brethren in the faith.

It is of immense importance for ministers to be very explicit and resolved on all fundamental points. Whenever they allow any compassionate feeling, or friendly acquaintance, or family connexions, or assumed religion to warp their judgment therein, they tread on the brink of a precipice—on the verge of a volcano,—confound truth and error,—introduce uncertainty and obscurity on the most momentous subjects,—lower the authority of Scripture,—perplex true believers,—gratify infidels,—dishonour Christ,—grieve the Spirit, and open a door to all sorts of heresies. Public teachers of christianity are bound to abide by the teachings of inspiration, and these emphatically declare that Jesus knew no sin, in any sense, manner, or measure whatever. The way of righteousness is a strait way all through; just as strait in the matter of faith as of practice. The one, when sound, is the foundation of the other; and no greater mistake can be fallen into than supposing that a sinner's life can be good and acceptable when his faith is fundamentally at fault. A man's life may, in some things external, be better than his faith; but in its internal character it is ever exactly as his faith is.

A creed that affixes a stain on the person of the Incarnate God, is an error not of judgment, but *of the heart*. It lays another foundation than God has laid, and what hope can there be then? Those who

believe rightly in the Incarnation, too often build upon the right foundation—wood, hay, and stubble, and yet are saved (Cor. iii. 12, 13); but how can they be saved whose foundation is wrong? It is a blow at the root, and, if persisted in, is necessarily fatal. It amounts to blasphemy; and its nature is such,—and the moral constitution of man is such,—that this creed is wholly incompatible with the rest of the heart on Him, as an all-perfect Saviour, and therefore is incompatible with salvation. It is inconsistent with those views of the exalted glory of Christ, the spiritual glory of God, which ever accompany a sound faith. There is a continual and universal panting of all human souls, in the way either of dependent desire, or of fear and dread, towards the Almighty; but the soul of man will never, in reality, commit itself for safety to a Being of whose absolute perfection it has no inward conviction, because then it is not satisfied that it can run no risk in this unlimited confidence. Admit the possibility of imperfection, of a stain, of sin, in any sense, in the Saviour, and that moment the soul of man is driven off from all sure rest and confidence. There may then exist a great deal of thinking and talking about believing in Christ, together with a certain kind of very high profession; but there can be no living sympathy with Him; the root of the matter is consequently absent, and all is delusion.

Let the immortal and guilty spirit come into the presence of Eternal Justice, and try to allay the agitations of its dismayed heart, if it can, by turning to a Saviour, not absolutely perfect. It cannot do it. A dread of the Infinite Rectitude will still hold the mind and heart; and the sinner will strive in vain after relief so long as any particle of doubt of the absolute perfection of the Advocate and Surety lurks within.

Both the Church and the world are ready enough to lean to the side of laxity, to take soundness and safety for granted, and to accept some external visible signs for the inward spiritual grace; and this is an additional reason why, while we exercise an enlightened charity, that we should guard most carefully the fundamental principles of christianity, and the essential

qualifications of the christian. If the Bible repeatedly teaches that a man may go very far in religious knowledge and gifts, and seeming affections, yes, apparently to the very gates of heaven, and yet have not one particle of grace (Matt. xxv. 1 to 13); and if the heart is naturally so deep and filthy a sink of all deceit and uncleanness, as experience and observation testify, then surely we ought altogether to refuse to believe that people may question the absolute purity of Jesus, and yet rest on him as their only and all-sufficient Saviour. It is an amazing inconsistency to believe the awful and explicit warnings of Holy Scripture respecting the desperate infidelity of the heart, and the curse which it entails, and yet to plead for the rectitude and salvation of those who embrace and teach the most envenomed kind of infidelity. "*Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.*"—Deut. xxxii. 33. It is tantamount to asserting that a man may be saved by a wrong faith, an assumption against which Scripture explicitly and forcibly protests. Men may believe many things that are false, and sometimes do things which are wrong, and yet be right in the main, and be saved; but they cannot stumble at the foundation stone and be right,—they cannot disbelieve the absolute perfection of the Saviour and yet be saved. If so, Arians and Socinians may be as safe as any. There must be a certain point at which venial error stops, and here it is. The infidelity against which we bear our testimony,—touching the Redeemer's person, is peculiarly malignant. The common scepticism of the worldly is different in kind, far less deep and perilous.

It is consequently unwarrantable and injurious to speak of such persons as "deluded brethren." That they are satanically and awfully deluded is certain; that they are brethren in the faith notwithstanding this awful delusion, is a gratuitous assumption, not provable, not in any way countenanced, by Holy Scripture. Everything in Scripture and observation is opposed to such an assumption; and the supposed "practical influence of some of the many principles of the gospel fixed in the minds of such persons at the commencement of their

course; and still operating as a preservative from the dominant influence of their serious error,"* has no foundation in principle, nor, as we fear, in fact.

The sin of thus rejecting Christ is far greater than that of Sodom and Gomorrha, deeply defiling and abominable as it was. "The men of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida," says Mr. Hay, Sermon xvi. p. 153, "had no fellowship with the sinners of Sodom; those unlawful deeds which defiled the cities of the plain, had not been done on the shores of Galilee, yet was theirs a greater guilt,—a more offensive sin;—reputable and harmless people as they were, with what deep indignation our Lord denounces them. '*Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida.*' This is the sin for which there is no pardon, because it rejects Christ."

This error is one "subversive of the gospel of Christ; it saps the foundation of that divine righteousness by which the believer is justified. It degrades the Son of God, by representing him as groaning under a law in his members which warred against the law of his mind."† We cannot then understand how those who embrace such an error can be preserved from the dominant influence of it, by "some of the main principles of the gospel fixed in their minds at the commencement of their course." Here is *the* main principle of the gospel denied, rejected;—the Son of God degraded;—His divine righteousness as the sole ground of our justification treated as false doctrine. Of what value, then, are the other "main principles of the gospel?" Indeed, what are they? This is the root and main-spring of all those other principles. Let man reject this, and he virtually rejects all the gospel. Is he not without hope? If the foundations are destroyed, what can the sinner do?

The most cogent arguments against the soundness and safety of people embracing such sentiments might

* See the valuable and interesting Memoir of Miss Graham, by an estimable clergyman, the Rev. C. Bridges, 5th edition, p. 425.

† J. A. Haldane's Refutation of the Heretical Doctrine of E. Irving, p. 3.

readily be drawn from the meagre, jejune, crude, superficial, unsound character of all their religious publications,—the gaudiness of their church worship, in which they approximate to Rome,—and the many changes they have made therein within a few years: we however prefer not to enter into a consideration of these points, but to take our stand on the fundamental principles of the gospel, on the single ground of the Infinite Purity of the Incarnate God. Whoever is wrong here, is wrong all through, let their appearances of piety be what they may.

Besides, such deadly heresies are never found alone. In this case, among other fundamental errors, those of baptismal regeneration and the denial of the right of private judgment, follow in the train.

We are unwilling to yield to any in the strength of our conviction of the duty and blessedness of exercising charity in our judgments of men; but true charity is too frequently belied in such circumstances as these. The soul of charity is charity to the soul; and we never consult its interests so certainly as when we look at them through the medium of the heavenly revelation of the divine nature and excellency of Christ, and refuse to allow any considerations whatever to warp our convictions of the fatal errors of all those who, in any way, attempt to affix a stain on the Immaculate Son of God.

There is a charity which is a defect, a mistake; and there is a charity which is a wonderful virtue. The former begins with man and ends with man, and can consequently never rise above man and this deluded world; can never touch his highest interests. Its field of view is contracted, never reaching beyond the boundaries of earth. It refuses to have anything to do with eternity. It lives upon human opinion, is built upon natural desires and affections, on self-love; and is anxious to spare others, because we would not compromise ourselves. It obstinately refuses to give due consideration to fundamental and eternal truth.

The charity which is so great a virtue, begins with God and ends with Him. Taking its rise from the heavenly world, it comes down to earth and

embraces the highest as well as the lowest interests of man;—looks straight forward into the vast unknown, scorning to be limited in its views and conceptions by what is present and transitory. It knows nothing of human opinion and authority. It concerns itself only with truth,—essential, immutable truth. It is built upon that, and disregards the clamours of mere natural desires and affections. Its language invariably is, What says God? and on the divine voice it lives and gathers strength. While the ordinary charity of the world is a flimsy fleeting thing of a day, this charity lives for ever.

That divine assurance (1 John ii. 19)—“*They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us,*” has a more extensive meaning than most religious people are willing to admit. Too commonly, instead of seeking for the cause of such diabolical doctrines as are now adverted to, in the right direction, viz. in morbid constitutional extravagance, combined with the total absence of a thorough humbling law work on the conscience, and consequently of real spiritual experience,—they fix upon every source but the right one, and thereby inflict a grievous wound on the Church. If the antecedents of the originators—both ministers and laymen—of such heresies are duly investigated, they will be found to afford clear and ample proof of a morbid imagination, proneness to excessive mental excitement and curious speculations, with over-weening conceit and arrogance. Considerable and even brilliant abilities may sometimes be found among such persons, but they are not right-minded; and then great abilities only serve to effect the greater injury. If men possessed the talents and knowledge of Satan himself, of what advantage would it be to them and the Church, if the mind and heart are wrong?

We should not have been disposed to enter upon such subjects as the present if they were not of uncommon moment in these days of an active press, and if multiplied proofs were not continually rising up

among those who are termed evangelical ministers, of a disposition to set off certain gifted individuals as enlightened teachers, and sound believers, who were the authors and promulgators of unscriptural, pernicious, and even blasphemous conceits,—men who introduced opinions and practices, which, wherever they were followed, led to all kinds of extravagance, both in sentiment and practice, and scandalized the religion of Christ. Mr. Hay felt very keenly that whoever, in any degree, upholds such writers loses sight of the character and government of God, as revealed in the Scriptures; and that if the panegyrists are evangelical, they thus impair or destroy the consistency, purity, and majesty of the doctrines they profess.

We ought to be reluctant to pass a judgment on the personal and final condition of any one not absolutely guilty of propagating a blasphemous doctrine; it may be conceded that we should keep at the utmost possible distance from everything of this kind; but this is clear and certain, that we are in no degree whatever justified by Holy Scripture in pronouncing the state of any one safe and blessed who is radically unsound on the principal fundamental doctrines of the Bible. Mr. Hay taught that “salvation results from right views of God,” of Christ (p. 144), and he maintained that without right views of God, it cannot be enjoyed. He felt that such views arise from a new, divine illumination, wrought by the Holy Ghost, whereby the mind obtains a direct intuitive insight into spiritual things, as those which delight and satisfy the heart (2 Cor. iii. 16, 17, 18—iv. 6; John vi. 40); and especially into the excellency of the divine nature of the person of Christ, his love and righteousness. It is a spiritual commanding light, which brings to view at the same time the hidden and inexhaustible evils of our hearts, and the infinite grace and purity of the Redeemer; and never admits of crude, metaphysical trifling on man’s depravity and redemption. It is an attractive and binding influence and power. But if a sinner, instead of being attracted by this grace, and purity, and excellency, eagerly looking to the cross and substitution of Christ, as the sole ground of hope

and source of peace,—very rarely adverts to it, and, although a voluminous writer, “when he does treat of it, does so very vaguely,”—his language and feelings being altogether “different from that of the ransomed believer, as he fixes his earnest eye on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith;” then nothing taught in the divine records, nothing we know of the nature of true humiliation, repentance and faith, justifies us in setting forth such persons, as possessing, notwithstanding all their radical errors, “deeply sincere Christian faith and love.” We should unquestionably be tender of our fellow-sinners; but it is still more incumbent on us not to travel beyond the record, not to mystify God’s Word, not to confound things which essentially differ,—not to stand forth with a warrant for the safety and blessedness of those whom we, at the same time, acknowledge to have been deeply and seriously in error on all the fundamental doctrines of revelation. This we certainly ought not to do; and if there were not far too many attempts of this kind published to the world by Christian ministers, we should not think it our duty to animadvert on the practice. The truth of God, the honour of Christ, ought to be dearer to us than any thing else; and however saddening it may be to leave others to draw a conclusion on such points, unfavourable to men of standing in the church, and to some authors of genius and great talents, we may be certain that, being commanded not, on any consideration whatever, to contravene the word of Jehovah, the highest interests of our fellow-men are served by an implicit and immovable adherence to that word. The memorable sentiments of President Edwards merit more attention than they receive. “It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ. Therefore it greatly concerns us to use our utmost endeavours, clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist.”—*Preface to his Religious Affections*, p. 4-6.

We must therefore protest against the practice of

holding up, as "sincere in the faith," persons who at the same time are acknowledged to be radically unsound on the fall and depravity of man, on the Atonement, regeneration, justification, faith,—who stated that "reason is the test of revelation, or that it can anticipate and supersede the necessity of revelation;"* who are consequently, by the panegyrist's own admission, radically unsound on all the principal and fundamental doctrines of the Bible. If we cannot, on right grounds, speak satisfactorily with regard to the piety of such authors, we can at least be silent.

We fear that among those ministers from whom we have a right to expect better things, a disposition commonly exists to make true religion an easier thing than it is. This kind of teaching was common in our Lord's days; it is scarcely less so now. After admonishing his hearers how strait the gate to heaven is, in Matt. vii. 13, 14, Christ directly exhorts them to beware of false prophets (v. 15), and assures them that much preaching in his name, and casting out devils, and doing many other wonderful works, afford no proof that the evil spirit is cast out of us. In nothing of a public nature did the subject of this memoir more clearly exhibit a contrast to such loose opinions as we now controvert. Whatever were the defects in his public teaching, it cannot be charged upon him, that he so taught as to make religion an easier thing than Christ represents it. In this point of view his sermons are excellent. His great doctrine evidently was,—*True religion is the most difficult work in the world; take care you do not mistake its nature and requirements.*

Hence we readily perceive the source of his conviction, that personal Christianity is quite a different thing from what it is ordinarily taken to be; and that he could have no sympathy with those writers on religion who never afforded any evidence of deep humiliation of soul, of great sorrow of heart for sin, of child-like Christian simplicity, of strict attention to

* "A Lecture on Coleridge and his Followers," by the Rev. W. M. Hetherington, LL.D., delivered before the Young Men's Christian Association.

relative and social duties;—but whose publications, on the contrary, exhibit too many sad proofs of self-sufficiency and conceit, of a vain and arrogant spirit of theorizing and dogmatizing,—dignified with the name of philosophy,—and an endeavour to make God's word answerable at the bar of man's reason. He considered this to be traceable to a radical defect in the state of the writers' minds—of their internal disposition and principles; to that unhumbled proud spirit natural to mankind, indicating extreme ignorance of God and themselves. He maintained that the very first operation of God's Spirit on man is to lay him in the dust, to make him feel that he is a guilty worm, that he knows nothing aright but as God is pleased to teach him; and where these signs were not visible, he thought talents, fine thoughts, and even many truths forcibly expressed, of no value whatever to the writer himself. Without relationship to God, we have no warrant to hope to see his glory:—

“And you must ascertain that,” he says (p. 30), by what you can bring to light of God's work on your inmost nature, and traces of his image in your heart. If you have ground for thinking that there is friendship and agreement between God and you, you are entitled to hope that, having begun a change, he means to carry it on, and bring you finally to himself. But to talk of having hope in God for the next life, without showing the behaviour of a dutiful and affectionate child in this, is an intrusion upon the birthright and peculiar privilege of others,—an infatuation which devils laugh at, and which angels pity.”

Are we, then, to be taught by ministers, yes, by such as are found in the evangelical section, that persons who certainly did not take the Bible as their sole directory in matters of faith and practice,—who looked on the reason of fallen, depraved man, living at enmity with the Infinite Intelligence, as “the authoritative declarer and supreme arbiter of moral and religious truth,” making the feeble, erring reason of man the judge of the revelation of God;—who, as already remarked, evidently did not understand the primary fundamental doctrines of that revelation;—and who, withal, were by no means remarkable for their performance of the

most common and necessary duties of social life ;—are we to be taught, in these enlightened times, that such, notwithstanding, were unquestionably pious Christians? Nothing, coming from clergymen, can well exceed the arrogant, unblushing infidelity of some recent writings on the subject of man's moral state, and of personal religion. Not only are they plentifully bespattered with mystifications of Scripture, gratuitous and absurd assumptions, and false logic, but they likewise contain an immense amount of confident assertion, plainly and rancorously antagonistic to the Divine Record, on all fundamental points.* Now are we to be told that such men as these are, in spite of all this, sound believers, and that their mystification and

* The Rev. F. D. Maurice seems ambitious of being foremost among those clergymen who mislead the people on their most momentous concerns. My humble testimony shall not be wanting against the unutterable evil of such opinions as his, and the fearful rebellion against the Word and Majesty of Jehovah, in which they take rise. The Bible states man's heart to be naturally great only in wickedness, and all history, sacred and profane, public and private, confirms the awful fact;—but Mr. Maurice says it is great in good. The Bible asserts that mankind, by nature, have a spirit of evil,—that they are under the curse,—that they are earthly and sensual. This clergyman asserts that they are “holy creatures of God, made for all good,” only they do not know it. It is to be regretted that they do not know it, if it is so; but as it is not so, but the very reverse, it is among the most cruel of falsehoods to inculcate such a doctrine, and the worst of curses to believe it, for then man has no hope of rescue. The knowledge of the disease is half the cure; but ignorance of, and insensibility to the malady, is here certain death. Referring to the Unitarians, he does not think “the moral disease at the root of their most vehement intellectual denials, is, necessarily, a malignant one” (*Essays*, 117);—then it must be venial; then the extreme jealousy with which Paul guards the Gospel of Christ (Gal. i. 8, 9), was uncalled for; then wholly to reject the Divinity of Jesus is of no great moment. Mr. Hay looked with horror on such statements, feeling that they are in the highest degree dishonourable to God and poisonous to man. He traced them all up chiefly to ignorance of the nature and infinite evil of *sin* (p. xxxiii—50), maintaining that no one who had felt the plague of his own heart, and who had any sense of the holiness and awful Majesty of the Sovereign of the universe, could be the author of sentiments so antagonistic to revelation, so contrary to experience, and so awfully destructive. It would be only common honesty for men who promulgate opinions in direct contradiction to the Articles (ii, ix, xviii. xxxv.) of the Church to which they belong, to go out of it.

flat contradictions of God's Word, on all the most vitally important doctrines, although their heresy has constrained the church to cast them out of their Professorships, do "not very seriously impair the deep sincerity of their Christian faith and love?" Are we justified in resting quiet, when, through the length and breadth of the land, publications are circulated by evangelical ministers and religious societies, expressing their full conviction that although all the foundations of faith are impugned and denied by certain clever writers, yet they are nevertheless men of sincere and fervent piety? They have no Divine foundations to stand upon; they would destroy them; and yet they are safe and blessed!

It must, then, be an easy thing to be a Christian, much easier than was thought by the subject of this memoir. He taught, as the Bible teaches, that it is a very difficult thing; that multitudes of the fairest professors are deceived, even among those who are sound in the theory of Christianity; and that the great and common flaw is in the foundations. The superstructure, he says, often looks fair enough, but the foundations are wrong, and then all is lost. It is inexpressibly lamentable that some ministers, greatly enlightened in the main principles of Divine truth, instead of skilfully dividing that truth, and carefully separating the chaff from the wheat, endeavour to harmonize things which essentially and eternally differ; justifying the inference that the foundations may be sandy, and yet the house be very firm and good!

A superficial view of life may suggest that such statements are legitimately those of charity; but what if they contravene the words of Jehovah,—what if they are flatly in contradiction to the teachings of Inspiration? We have no wish to obtrude upon the world our opinions respecting the want of piety in particular individuals; our sole object is to uphold the majesty, authority, and supremacy of the Scriptures. "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*"—Isaiah viii. 20. Our proper business in such cases is, to follow where God is pleased to lead; rightly to interpret his word, and to set forth

and abide by his laws. Our commendations can add nothing to any one, nor our condemnation take anything from him; what he is in the sight of God, that he is in reality, nothing more nor less. Our duty and interest, then, are to take the Bible for our sole guide, since it alone embodies the laws by which we shall be judged.

The voice from heaven declares, that "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord*;" and how can a sinner possess holiness who is ignorant of the divine truths upon which alone it can be built,—who evidently does not understand the subject of man's corruption, or his regeneration, or his justification in Christ, or his sanctification, or the atonement of Jesus,—the primary cardinal doctrines of God? As a man of letters, such an individual may amuse himself and others with one opinion after another, but can never reach *the* truth itself,—much less afford any proof whatever of having the Spirit's sense of sin, and the Spirit's sight of Christ,—of having, with all the simplicity and heartiness of a child, fled to Christ as his only ground of reliance. Divine truth is a divine law, fixed and immutable; and the day advances upon all of us, in which we shall see far more clearly than is now possible, the duty and importance of our grasping and maintaining the truth as God gives it to us, wholly unintimidated and unbiassed by the tremendous consequences to others in which their rejection of it involves them. "He that trusts in a lie, shall perish in truth."

To assert, as Coleridge and some other modern writers on religion have done,—following infidel Germans,—that "reason is able to compass revelation," is wholly and radically false and mischievous.*

* How enlightened, resolved, and mighty an enemy the illustrious Bunyan was to such "high-towerings and imaginations" as we now protest against, is well known to all acquainted with his admirable writings. He says, "The spiritual armour of Christians should be much exercised against those high-towering and self-exalting imaginations, that within our own bosoms do exalt themselves against the knowledge of God; that every thought, or carnal reasoning, may be not only taken, but brought a captive into obedience to Christ; that is, be made to stoop to the Word of God, and to give way and place to the doctrine therein contained, how cross soever our thoughts and the word be to each other."

The doctrines of God, and the sublime mysteries that his Word contains, can all be compassed by the mind of man, and that man a ruined apostate! Such an opinion subverts the primary fact of Christianity,—universal depravity and ruin; it ignores the need of the Spirit's influence, and therefore aims a blow at the foundation of revelation. It is a deadly poison (1 Cor. ii. 14). What a degree of proud, self-righteous presumption, and of dark rebellion such sentiments involve, we shall not attempt to describe.

In this day of diffused Christian knowledge it is not sufficiently considered, how wide and essential a difference exists between a superficial knowledge and that internal feeling of the soul, which we call faith,—how able and acute people may be in the promulgation of some religious truths, which, after all, are only separate portions or fragments of truth; the authors being nevertheless utterly in the dark as to the essential and fundamental truth of God. Some men write cleverly on subjects which they do not at all understand. Indeed, such authors now form a large class, and their manner of writing shows that they never possessed that divine illumination and awakening, without which, all a man knows is only the form of knowledge, and all he feels is no more than some sort of uneasy and bewildered conviction that he is not right and safe,—and there it ends. It is possible for men to be cursed in their great abilities and learning, and to be a curse to others with them, and this is one of the most fearful signs of our times. "Knowledge is folly unless grace guide it."—1 Cor. iii. 18, 19.

Nothing is of such importance to mankind as to be thoroughly enlightened and well resolved *in the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favour with God,—in other words, in what is the nature of true religion.* Consequently, nothing can be so cruel as to misrepresent or mystify those qualifications; for it is no less than to mislead men in the most momentous concern of their existence, and so in reality to lead them on to endless ruin, instead of helping them to everlasting felicity. The Almighty has declared that, "*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;*" and

a long and intense conviction that false teachers, teachers of lies, abound in the visible Church as well as in the world,—sometimes where they are least expected,—who either flatly or covertly inculcate doctrines utterly at variance with the Sacred Canon;—and a firm persuasion, also, that it is a mighty difficult thing to live as a Christian;—must be our apology for dwelling on this subject. A perusal of Mr. Hay's Sermons will be sufficient to show, that in our remarks we only expand a little his sentiments. "The body is sooner dressed than the soul."

The following extracts from letters written by Mr. Hay, in 1848, to an experienced Christian friend in Edinburgh, will be read with interest. Some subjects already noticed in this memoir are here pointedly referred to.

"Ventnor, Jan. 18, 1848.

"I am beginning to weary for another communication from you, which, though I know how fully your time is occupied, I trust you may be able soon to send me. I want to be your pupil, and to have the stream of your thoughts and speculations poured into my ears. More particularly I want you to unveil to me the various delusions and errors in sacred things, which are generally and without question received, to the infinite detriment of the truth, and which are so little suspected to be such. I wish also I could fully apprehend your mind on a point you have often spoken of, the *knowledge* man possesses, and his part being to *unlearn*. I should so much like to see this idea developed and illustrated—but it is asking too much, and you will think me most unconscionable; only if you could put your thoughts down on paper at any spare moments, and send them to me in their rough state, they would be very valuable. * * *

You see what disturbances there have been in our Church. It seems we are advancing steadily towards a rupture. The evangelical section among us need, I think, much Dr. C.'s admonition, to be up and at work. More particularly it seems now the time for us to make a stand against the dogma of Baptismal Regeneration, which some of the bishops are beginning to make the test of admission for candidates to orders, and is the foundation of Tractarian theology. In the last century the testimony needed was to the *reality* and *necessity* of the new birth,—and it was borne by Whitefield, Wesley, and others. Now, we have to testify, not that man *must* be born again—for that is allowed—but *how*—not by

sacramental efficiency, but by the Word and Spirit of God. I find this place agree well with me, and am, by God's blessing, much better. We have had but little really cold weather. I am reading Dr. Love's Letters,—what pearls they are!

“Westridge, Ryde, May 17, 1848.

* * *

“I send a tract—not at all worthy of your perusal, being intended only for my own country parishioners, with whom, defects of style and power matter little, if it is only truth that is stated, and stated plainly—which I hope is the case.

* * In reference to Romans i.—which you allude to, have you observed where the Apostle begins, in bringing the charge of guilt against mankind (v. 20), neglecting to see God through the veil of his works,—to realize therein his power and Deity,—to learn thence the dependence of all on him, and the danger of acting in opposition to such a Creator. Through this neglect—inexcusable—for they would not see what God showed—the more knowledge they got, the more corrupt they became—as must, of necessity, be the invariable effect of unsanctified knowledge—thence, all that follows (v. 23, &c., &c., &c.).

* * * You mention making use of something I said—which you showed—you don't say to whom. You are quite welcome, though I cannot believe it can ever be anything that most do not know and feel before. I quite forget what the particular thing* was you allude to.”

“6, Grand Parade, St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

“Nov. 16, 1848.

* * *

“I have been lately reading, with great pleasure, Hugh Miller's “First Impressions.” How clear and shrewd a man he is! His remarks on our Church have much force in them. We are in a pitiably divided condition. But it happens that what shocks you most as erastianism is what is more irritating to the Puseyites than to the Evangelicals, in which I agree with the former. Our theory of bishop-making, abstractedly, is good, I think. The Crown is supposed to nominate, as representatives of the people, making choice of an acceptable person, and one suitable to have the oversight of them. If we could cut off the Congé d'elire to the Dean and Chapter, and restore to its proper place, the Confirmation of the Bishop, I should be well satisfied—for

* It was the remarkable passage as to “a single sinner” in his letter of Nov. 7, 1847—p. 33.

then we should have it a crown nominating on the part of the people, and the Church confirming or rejecting such nomination by refusing or consenting to confirm. One of the glaring abuses is the want of a direct spiritual court to try spiritual offences—for which efforts are making. As to the patronage, I don't think we shall ever come, in England, to see it just as you do; but we want checks to our present system.

"We are come here for three or four months. I have been very well all the summer, and able to preach a little."

"6, Grand Parade, St. Leonard's, 28 Nov. 1848."

"I am reading Boston's Life, with his own Memoranda of it, with great pleasure,—old fashioned, and rather monotonous as it is;—but it is a valuable picture of a very close and conscientious walk with God, and very instructive in that way. I met with "The Marrow," with his Notes, in a shop here, and bought it, but have not yet entered on it.

"I have those views before me a good deal just now, "if children, then heirs." How much hangs on that "if" and "then!" But, the "if," beyond question, and the "then," clearly and explicitly—and dwelling on it as such, as regards all we have to do with it, would do much to set the *claim* to it in its proper light—as entirely by right of adoption, to the exclusion of all right of deserving, which cannot be driven out of the heart till the other view is fully received. What searchings of heart, too, it leads to!—if *children*, then heirs.—How easy and how fatal to mistake in this!"

The Manchester Education Bill, framed by the Rev. H. Stowell and the principal clergy of that town, and sent up to Parliament in 1852, was a bill for levying an educational rate there, in which all parties,—Protestants, Papists, Jews, Swedenborgians, Socinians, and all other denominations,—were equally to participate. It provided that all such schools, without distinction, should be at liberty to draw pecuniary aid from the money levied. It mattered not whether truth was taught in them, or pestilential error,—whether the Bible was read or rejected. The principle of Scriptural education, as essential to the moral ends contemplated in the education of the masses, being thus relinquished by this bill,—we strongly protested against it, and denounced it as in principle thoroughly infidel, and in practice dangerous. In reference to this bill, Mr. Hay says, in a letter to the editor, dated

“Westridge, March 2, 1852.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Your strictures on the Manchester Educational Scheme are, I think, most just and forcible. I should like to hear what Mr. Stowell has to say in answer to them. I hope you have sent him a copy. Lord Derby has made a good profession. May we expect he will act upon it, and countenance no education not based on Scriptural instruction? But the whole plan propounded at Manchester of rating for Schools would need to be modified. It would not be fair to rate Papists or Jews for Schools from which they could have no advantage,—especially as it is meant, I apprehend, to be a voluntary arrangement entered on by the town. If there are not at present powers to enforce a rate for *Scriptural* education, I doubt if Parliament will ever grant them. So the friends of such education will need to work by themselves.

“Have you got Edwards’ just published work on Charity? It is worthy of his pen. I have just received Taylor’s Wesley and Methodism, which I suppose you have read by this time.

“I hope you have had as much of health this winter as you could expect. I have,—with nothing more the matter than a cough, occasionally troublesome, and at times languor and weakness. I preach almost every Sunday here or at Ryde.

“Does the Record uphold you in your remonstrance against the Manchester Scheme?”

This bill was utterly at variance with the professed principles and recorded convictions of its chief promoters. Although many of the clergy and laity of Manchester had been for years in open hostility to Popery,—truly alleging that Popish schools are seminaries of pestilential error, and of disloyalty,—that their system is one “that goes to enslave the child to the man; that goes to cherish the sins of the child, and to supersede its faith; that goes to make the child hold its Bible to be no book for it;” yet, strange to say, they framed this bill so as to admit not only Jews and Socinians, but Papists, on their own terms of a closed Bible, to all the assistance it was to secure, and even invited their co-operation! Mr. Hay justly considered such a course plainly one of low expediency, latitudinarian, and glaringly inconsistent.

These remarks are made in no unkind spirit. Far

from it. All error is hurtful; but error in fundamental principles,—errors in which professors of Christianity appear as propounding a measure whereby a Christian population is to be taxed to support anti-Christian systems that they abjure,—are most pernicious and perilous; and these remarks are prompted by the hope that they will not be wholly without effect, in warning our readers never to take part in any public scheme on the ground of mere supposed utility, or because it is recommended by reputable names. We ought ever to look at the measure, not at the men who propound it; for good men are not always wise, and able, zealous men, often fall, as in this case, into great and fundamental mistakes. We hope that our remarks may have some effect also in preventing another such application to Parliament by our Manchester friends. Mankind at large know no rule but that of personal advantage and expediency. Multiplied proofs, however, are not wanting, that even those from whom we expect better things, not unfrequently contravene all their long cherished convictions and oft-reiterated sentiments, when they expect some pecuniary aid to their own party to follow. So deceitful above all things is the human heart! So broken a reed is man to lean on! So powerful and successful are the temptations of the world and the devil!

The first and chief thing we have to do is to live by the Bible, to maintain an unshaken loyalty to the divine government;—practically to remember that the good of creatures is not the primary end of the creation;—that God must ever have the first and principal regard to his own glory, and that a course can never be otherwise than derogatory to His honour which leads us, in any degree or manner whatever, to countenance what is false and unscriptural. Under the most favourable circumstances, we possess little power to reach and impress the moral nature of man,—what then can men expect when they fly in the face of their own principles, drawn from the Bible, and resist the Spirit of God?

CHAPTER VI.

1853.

Opens a large church at Lynn—His habitual preparation for death—Unwillingness of Christians to die—His last days.

DURING the winter of 1852-3 Mr. Hay and Lady Alicia resided with their esteemed friend Mrs. Young, of Westridge, Isle of Wight, and at that time he assisted the Rev. J. T. Marsh, of St. James' Chapel, Ryde, pretty regularly, on the Sabbath morning; and that gentleman says—"his health being very delicate, I frequently felt afraid lest he should overwork himself." He enjoyed his connexion with the St. James' congregation, and spoke of it in his last days with evident satisfaction.

In February, 1853, he was engaged to preach at the opening of the Church of St. Nicholas, at Lynn, and the following letter to the editor was among the last he was favoured to receive from him. The sermon preached on that occasion was the last he delivered in that town, and will be found at page 178.

"North Runcton, Lynn, Feb. 24, 1853.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—It was a great pleasure to receive your letter yesterday. I had it just before going to Lynn, to preach at the re-opening of a large church there. I never addressed so great an assembly before,—a building 200 feet long, crammed with people. It needed the utmost stretch of my artificial voice to be heard. The subject was Isaiah lvi. 1, 2. Jehovah's true temple; not one made with hands, but as it was originally, a man, and not such as we would fashion and prepare for him, were we to attempt to fit up *and furnish ourselves* for his habitation; for when we have

collected under one roof all that in our estimation is most bright and precious, still that is lacking which will make him look to it with complacency and delight,—“Poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word,”—these are just the qualities we cannot produce, and the sacrifices we cannot offer. This man, therefore, must be of divine workmanship; and though he was so rudely expelled from the temple he at first fitted up for himself in man's soul, yet at what a cost hath he devised a plan for restoring it,—removing its unsightly disfigurements,—bringing back its faded glory.

“Your remarks chanced to be most apposite to the subject, and I made them my own; for, as you truly say, the price has been paid,—yet how few temples are rebuilt,—how few of such a spirit to whom God can look. Surely we have not because we ask not. Sin is all we can call our own. What a constant attitude, then, should we maintain, of begging, and looking, and receiving, for the fulness whence the supply comes, is inexhaustible.

“The weather continues very severe, and I think I shall do wisely in postponing my long looked for visit to Epsom till April, when I may hope to be able to spend a Sunday there, for at present I could only have come on Thursday next, as I must be here till then to see one of my sisters, and return to the island on Saturday, as I must be at my post again on Sunday. I have some prospect of work at Bath. Mr. Widdrington, rector of Walcot, thinks there may be some of a light kind vacant there. I should like the place much. I hope to send you a copy of Dr. Love's sermons when I return. If you know any persons wishing to possess the volume, the enclosed will give directions for getting it.

*

*

*

“Yours truly and affectionately, “S. HAY.”

With a spare, enfeebled body, presenting all the evidences of such disease as betokened a brief sojourn on earth, he still thought of his great work, and here adverts to some prospect of it at Bath, after leaving Ryde. His chief business was to speak in that great Name which he so dearly loved, and for the benefit of mankind, in whose highest welfare he took to the last so deep an interest. But that work was fast drawing to a close. This, however, although a loss to the world, was to himself great gain; for he strove to live as a

stranger upon earth, sedulously cultivating a willingness to die. One who knew him most intimately says, "He always appeared to me to have his thoughts and his heart raised to heaven in a remarkable manner." And the clergyman—a gentleman, we believe, of sound religious experience—whose testimony to his character appears in these sheets, at page 19, concludes that communication by saying—"His last letter to me was lying on my table, unanswered, when I heard of his death. He was ripe for heaven." In a subsequent letter it will be seen that, after expressing his desire that the dews of heaven should be further vouchsafed on his heart, Mr. Hay says—"then the sooner the transplantation takes place, the happier for me."

In a world where everything passes away so speedily,—our very life passing as a weaver's shuttle,—the only state of mind proper to our condition is that of a stranger and pilgrim. Not only so; it is indispensably necessary to the proof of our being safe and blessed. Mr. Hay asserts, as we have seen (p. 60), that "it is only of those who reckon themselves strangers and pilgrims, and have an aim beyond this earth, that God is not ashamed to be called their God."

Nevertheless, most Christians live all their days in a great strangeness to the life to come, and to serious meditations on the heavenly blessedness,* the loss of which is incalculably great. It was far different with him. Although it is evident that that looks like feigned love which does not desire to see the beloved, and that to a creature so frail and sinful as man is, and encompassed continually by so many and great enemies and dangers, nothing can be so suitable to his condition as a daily earnest preparation for his exit; yet we do not set ourselves purposely to cultivate

* Happily we now and then meet with a signal exception to this. "I am a stranger in this world," says Dr. Love, "because there is little of God in it; because it is full of carnality, ignorance of God, unbelief, want of the fear of God, profanity, presumption, and hypocrisy. I am intent upon the glorious presence and service of God in heaven, and a world of unmixed holiness and love. The shortness of this life is matter of habitual joy to me."—*Dr. Love's letters*, page 19.

a willingness to die, and to obtain a longing desire to be with God in heaven.

“The thought of death indulge ;
Give it wholesome empire ! let it reign,
That kind chastiser of thy soul in joy !
Its reign will spread thy glorious conquests far,
And still the tumults of thy ruffled breast.”

This is the only way of solid peace and joy. Alas ! how few of us really attain to it ; we think it something great if we can prop ourselves up with the opinions and experience of others. The best way in the world is the safe way out of it ; yet we are ever at the work of a multiplicity of miserable inventions, to quiet the restless soul, and to satisfy ourselves in some kind of worldly life, miscalled religious ; instead of abandoning ourselves absolutely to God—giving all here for all hereafter.

We may well think meanly of ourselves and of our religious attainments, seeing that we are still so fond of this world, and have so faint a desire to be gone to the brighter land,—so faint a desire, if any desire at all, to make our escape from the low pleasures of sense, and to be carried away to the grandeurs and glories of heaven ;—that we have so strong a hankering after the society of men and their commendations, and so weak a thirst to see God. Few things prove more clearly the deep stain of sin in man, the total corruption entailed by the fall, than the tenacity with which even the regenerate ordinarily cling to this brief, degraded and polluted life.

The Christian in the world is like Lot in Sodom. Exposed unceasingly to fightings without and fears within ; to bitter pains of body and anguish of spirit ; to the many other storms of external life, and all the tempests of hell ;—to the rage and malice of both men and devils ; and compelled to be a spectator of all the foul practices which prevail in every grade of society, and of all its amazing folly, sensuality, sottishness, and wickedness ; he yet still cleaves to earth ! He is withal conscious of the fiery flying serpents and scorpions by which he has been so often stung, and

perhaps the terrible falls which the god of this world has succeeded in giving him; still he commonly wishes to live a little longer!—he is loath to die! He is still desirous to abide a little longer in the land of his enemies; he is not heartily looking out to be gone to his father's house, the better land!* Why is this? The defects of evangelical preaching have already been adverted to, and we have intimated that the chief want seems to us to consist in the absence of a studious and prayerful inculcation of a *pilgrim-life*. We regard ourselves as Christian converts, or believers, but not as pilgrims and strangers; and does not the fault of this misconception, lie, in some degree, at the door of ministers, who so seldom and so superficially bring that great subject before their hearers? Life is not pressed home on us *as a pilgrimage*; nor the absolute necessity enforced of our confessing ourselves by practice in every duty, engagement, and relation of life, to be but strangers and pilgrims upon earth.†

* “Did we hear of a country in this world, where we might live in continual felicity, without toil, or sickness, or grief, or fear,—who would not wish to be there, though the passage were troublesome? Have we not heard enough of heaven to allure us thither? or is the credit of eternal truth suspected by us? Are God's own reports of the future glory unworthy of our belief or regard? How many, upon the credit of his word, are gone already triumphantly into glory; ‘who, only seeing the promises afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them,’ and never after owned themselves under any other notion than of pilgrims on the earth, longing to be at home in their most desirable heavenly country? We are not the first to open heaven; the main body of saints is already there; it is, in comparison of their number, but a scattered remnant that are now alive upon the earth. How should we long to be associated in that glorious assembly! Methinks we should much more regret our being so long left behind. But now, if only the mere terror and gloominess of dying trouble thy thoughts, this, of all others, seems the most unreasonable pretence against a willing surrender of ourselves to death. Reason hath overcome it, and natural courage, even some men's atheism,—shall not faith?”—*Howe*.

† “Very few leave upon the mind of their family or friends a conviction or an impression that they *feel* themselves to be pilgrims. Accordingly, how seldom you ever parted from any but a very aged, or very infirm Christian, saying to yourself, ‘That man thinks, and speaks, and acts as really and truly a pilgrim.’”—*R. Philip's Preface to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*.

Throughout the Bible the exhortation to us all, either expressly, or by implication, runs thus: "*As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*" and yet how rarely we hear it taught and earnestly dwelt upon from the pulpit.

About the latter end of July, 1853, Mr. Hay was rather suddenly seized with an aggravation of his old complaint—disease of the lungs—symptoms appearing which proved that an ulcer there had burst; and he speedily declined in appetite and strength. Being unequal to any clerical duty, he set off with Lady Alicia to the English lakes, thinking the change might be beneficial, but on their arrival there, dropsical symptoms supervened, and he became, in every way, so much worse, that they hastened back to the house of their friend and relative, the Hon. Thomas Erskine, at Fir Grove, Winchfield.

On Saturday, the 3rd of September, he came to Epsom for medical advice; and now the painful task devolves on us to say a few words respecting *his last days*. *Last days!* to multitudes, alas! the last of everything good; the end of all ease, and sweetness, and solace. To him, the last of all sorrow, and woe and sin; the end of cares, the end of pains;—the bright harbingers of a cloudless sky, of a bright and boundless inheritance, where affection is ever in bloom,—"*There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, nor light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.*"

It was with great difficulty he travelled to Epsom, The dropsy had already reached as high as the pit of the stomach, and all his appearance, symptoms, and movements, betokened that his last day was at hand. We all saw that he was a dying man; but no sign appeared of fear, distress, or anxiety. He was cheerful and conversible,—would not allow any one to sit up with him at night; and, during the week he remained with us, exhibited such singular and exemplary patience, resignation, and thankfulness, as are still delightful to contemplate. He suffered extremely during the night from cough, restlessness, and dryness of the mouth

and throat, yet never spoke of it; when interrogated, he made light of it all, and was, with difficulty, prevailed upon to allow an early breakfast to be prepared, although we knew that he greatly needed it. He would dress himself and come down early. He drove out daily, and was greatly refreshed by the air; but no improvement whatever took place in his symptoms. During this week he wrote the following letter to his friend, Mrs. Young, Isle of Wight.

"Epsom, Sept. 7, 1853.

"DEAR MRS. YOUNG,—This has been a good day. I have felt stronger; yet I believe my state is very precarious, and recovery very doubtful. Dr. G. thinks the water, which is in great quantities, a very bad sign. But we have not the disposal of ourselves, and I am contented to be disposed of. The flesh shrinks from its own dissolution; yet what a boon to be delivered from its burden, and go to that land "where the inhabitants shall never say I am sick." My great text has been "*the wages of sin is death*,"—there is my due,—large arrears, a great sum;—"but the gift of God is eternal life." "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Through Jesus Christ we may have it for asking and taking. The expiatory blood—the justifying righteousness—the new creating spirit—give both the title and the meetness. How utterly without any stock and store we are of our own, *of any kind*. Our souls only cleave to dust, but quicken thou me.

"I expect to join my mother on Saturday at Brighton. Alicia to follow on Monday. I am most comfortable here, perhaps you may be able to come and see me one day at Brighton. It would be a great pleasure. I will write again D.V.—if I have the strength. This has been much my worst illness—caused, I know not how.

"Yours affectionately,

"S. HAY."

The sentiment that "it is a boon to be delivered from the burdens of the flesh," was the settled conviction of his heart; and although he was not absolutely delivered from fear at all times, yet his whole conversation, expressions, and deportment, proved that death had lost its sting. "To die," he says, in a subsequent letter, "is what one is rather anxious

for than the contrary." His faith had disarmed destruction, and built a bridge across the gulph of death.—

"Faith builds a bridge across the gulph of death,
To break the shock blind nature cannot shun,
And lands thought smoothly on the further shore."

During the last month of his life his weakness was so great, both of body and mind, that he found extreme difficulty in fixing his thoughts closely on any subject, and he derived great help and consolation from thinking on a single verse or two of Scripture, and from the Collects, which he then used as helps in prayer. He told us that the passage of Scripture which particularly engaged his attention at that time, was Rom. vi. 23,—"*The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" He said, this is my great text, on which I lean; and in the copy of the letter just introduced, we peruse his brief reasons for thinking it so suitable, and for using it as a help, to both humiliation and confidence. The Collect for the eighth Sunday after Trinity, was also, at this time, peculiarly sweet to him, leading his mind upwards to HIM, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things in heaven and earth, to whom he could look with respect to all issues, and on whom, in the short but comprehensive words of the Collect, he could roll himself daily and hourly, for life or death, as it might please Him to determine.

In a conversation with him at this time, he referred, with evident satisfaction, to an account published of an old minister who had been celebrated for his Christian labours, but who, on approaching his final hour, was not favoured with that peace and confidence which he had anticipated, and which are vouchsafed to many saints. This minister dreamed that he was at the gates of heaven, and made several attempts, under his ordinary state of mind, to gain admittance, but, for some unaccountable reason, he could not succeed. At length Manasseh having come up, and gone boldly and successfully forward, he dreamt that by getting and keeping close to his back, he entered at once into heaven. The inference drawn by the minister from this, was, that a

little self-righteousness still unconsciously clung to him, and that God would not look upon him, would not smile upon him, in that frame of mind; that he must absolutely renounce it all, and if he would enter heaven, it must be as a captive rescued by grace alone,—even as the bloody Manasseh, or the thief on the cross.

A few days before his death he exerted himself to write the following lines to the editor. He was then in a condition of extreme weakness; but the heavenly aspirations of his heart are therein disclosed, notwithstanding this state of debility, and we seem to feel, in reading them, that he was standing securely on the solid Rock—Christ Jesus, our Lord.

“50, Norfolk Square, Brighton,

(no date, but about 20 Sept. 1853).

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Thanks for your welcome note. We abound in all things. I want prayers and intercessions more than anything. As you say, I cannot *triumph*, but I do roll myself on those broad, legible, and sure promises. I dare not distrust the words of God. The Physician who has such an inexhaustible stock of remedies,—the blood—balm—eye-salve—righteousness—will not deny them. Eternal life, gifted to us *through* him, implies full equipment for it. In him is every thing needful to make us meet for it. My prayer is that work may go steadily on, and then the sooner the transplantation takes place the happier for me.

“Dr. Allen’s medicines are having some effect in lessening the flow of albumen, which he discovered was passing largely; till that is reduced, he dares not give any strong diuretic. I have very little sleep at night, yet no restlessness. Some days a total loss of appetite, and that altogether is, just now, very slight and whimsical. One day I am completely prostrated,—another, I feel twice as strong. It is a great mercy to be without pain. I have no more measured out than I can bear, and it is by a very kind hand. I am out twice daily. My affectionate regards to Mrs. G. and Miss H. Ever, my dear friend,

“Yours affectionately, “S. HAY.”

The following note was written with a pencil, from Brighton, on 21st Sept. 1853, just four days before his decease, and is believed to be the last thing he ever

wrote. It was to the friend in Edinburgh to whom the letters at page 78 were addressed.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Let me see your welcome writing, and some dottings. I have longed so to see you and dear Mrs. G. this summer. I am very weak—still at the gates of the grave, and, sooth to say, to get *well* out of this disjointed world, to go where the inhabitant shall never say—'I am sick,'—to shake off the sloth, grovelling propensities, and perversities of the old man, and to see *him*, through whom we are gifted with eternal life, is what one is rather anxious for than the contrary, if only we can get safely *into* the refuge and be vitally united to the Great Head,—one of his true sheep. Of that, one often doubts and fears, but I roll my soul on those broad and sure promises, and have but one plea. Write soon.

"Yours affectionately, S. HAY."

In his person he was tall and thin; he stooped a little, and his form was evidently fragile and consumptive. His moral physiognomy was bright and pleasing. "Every man carries his heart in his eye." He possessed, in a considerable degree, the spirituality of expression peculiar to the chosen generation; we mean that expression which, being the result of the new creation,—of a participation of the divine nature,—indicates a heavenly disposition and a captivated will. Regeneration is a mighty work, wrought by the Holy Ghost,—it brings man into fellowship with Jehovah,—and we might anticipate that it would strongly influence the general cast of countenance, which it unquestionably does.*

"Never man was truly bless'd,
But it composed, and gave him such a cast,
As folly might mistake for want of joy.
A cast unlike the triumph of the proud;
A modest aspect, and a smile at heart."

* Probably in no two men,—contemporaries, both ecclesiastics, and well acquainted with each other,—did the difference of moral physiognomy more strikingly depict the immense difference of religious character, than was visible in Fenelon and Bossuet. Bossuet's was the haughty, daring, "triumph of the proud;" Fenelon's the "modest aspect and the smile at heart." Fenelon's countenance was like that of Leighton and Fletcher, of Madeley, strongly irradiated with a heavenly sweetness and brightness.

The following particulars are extracted from a brief account of his last days, drawn up by a friend who visited him at Brighton.

"In reply to an inquiry about his health, he stated the bad opinion which Dr. G. had formed of his case, remarking, 'He told me this, as a matter of congratulation, believing the prospect of speedy dissolution to be a cause for the most hearty congratulations.'

"He was then asked if he did not sometimes find his patience tried by the long duration of illness. He replied, 'No! Whilst from the commencement I have felt that it might eventually lead to something serious, I consider it a mercy that I have never been anxious respecting it. I have never had any longing to get well, and now if I am ever to be any better, I am in no hurry about it. If I had to choose for myself (between recovery and removal), I could not hesitate a moment in deciding—it would be a relief indeed, to get free from the burden of the flesh and reach the land where the inhabitants never say, I am sick.'

"A remark made, having reference to a lecture he had delivered in St. James' Vestry, Ryde, 1853, led him to speak of the Ministry of Angels: 'Affliction, he said, helps us to realize their presence and Ministry, I like to think of them as watching around us, of their sympathy with us, and the interest with which they must wait for the time when they shall discharge for us their last office, and we shall become as free and sinless as themselves.' Reference was then made to our Saviour's sympathy, and some passages of Scripture brought forward. Mr. Hay concluding with the remark, 'and then we have only to carry upwards our thoughts and remember that now He is on high He retains the same nature and sympathies.'

"Referring to his own illness again, he said he could scarcely tell how his attack was brought on, that, for his own part, he attributed sufferings of the body, as well as mental temptations, to the agency of evil spirits; he believed that Satan longed both for our bodily and spiritual torment, and that God did allow him to be the instrument in inflicting upon us, as upon Job, *bodily suffering*.

"When he spoke of having had to resign the work he had undertaken for the winter months in London, he added, 'I have never been told as yet, there is no possibility of my recovery from this attack, though I know that both Dr. G. and my Brighton medical attendant think very badly of my symptoms; another month will, I think, decide the matter. So long as there is any possibility of my rallying, I feel it right and necessary to make some plans respecting the future; but so soon as the doctors think my case hopeless, I should like to be told, as I shall then endeavour to put away all earthly thoughts, trim my lamp, and sit as far as may be in heavenly places until my summons comes. I look forward with pleasure to two or three weeks spent in this manner; I do not think I am likely to suffer any severe bodily pain, and I could not, if I had my choice, desire any easier or pleasanter dissolution than that which would seem to be awaiting me.' He proceeded presently, 'I have sometimes thought of asking for the prayers of the congregations to which I have been in the habit of occasionally ministering, yet have not done so, as it is generally understood, I think, in such cases, that recovery is desired; and for this I have no wish. If mine were a sudden attack of illness, from which it was possible I might entirely recover, I should, I think, ask for life; but as there does not appear the least prospect (even if I recover from this attack) of my being sufficiently restored to allow me to lead an *active* life, I do not see that life can in any way be desirable, and I would not wish it should be asked for.' His friend said, independently of the public prayers of the St. James' congregation, he thought there were many belonging to it who would feel it a duty and a pleasure to bear his case in remembrance in private. 'Ah! he replied, for that I should be very grateful, I shall be glad if they will pray that I may become meet for God's kingdom, but I do not wish that they should pray for my life.' Then pausing a second, he added, 'If any of St. James' congregation ask after me, remember me to them most kindly, and say I shall feel greatly obliged if they will use, in my behalf, the prayer of Paul for Onesiphorus;

'The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.'—Timothy, 1 chap. 18 verse. My life only affords me reason for shame and pain in the retrospect; I take my place with the publican and the thief on the cross; but God's promises are such that I should feel a doubt to be sinful. I have no fear.'

"Here the conversation ceased, and the friend justly remarks that the mere perusal of *these sentences* can afford but a very poor idea of the impression which they were calculated to convey to the mind of one who heard them, so much depending upon the look, the tone of voice, and the manner. The point which struck him most forcibly in Mr. Hay's state of mind was, the entire subjugation of his will to God's will; there seemed not only to be submission to, and acquiescence in, whatever God might appoint, but readiness to *delight in it* on the ground of it's being God's appointment.

"The above conversation took place on September 28rd. The day following he complained of great pain, and was unable to leave his bed. On the Sunday morning, at eight o'clock, the pain still continuing, his medical attendant was sent for: when he came into the room, Mr. Hay asked 'Will it be long?' Dr. A. answered 'No, it will soon be over;' 'The sooner the better' was Mr. Hay's reply! At Dr. A's second visit, Mr. Hay enquired again of him how long it would be, and being answered that soon all would be over, replied, 'That is good news!' He spoke only on one other occasion, viz.: to ask for a little wine and water. He continued to suffer greatly from breathlessness until twelve o'clock at noon, when it pleased God to grant his servant the release he had desired, and to introduce him, as we doubt not, to the better land for which he had longed, 'Where the weary cease from their labours, and the inhabitants never say I am sick.'"

His dust sleeps in the Cemetery at Brighton, on the Lewes road.

"All must to their cold graves;
But the religious actions of the just
Smell sweet in death, and blossom in the dust."

S E R M O N S

BY THE

HONOURABLE AND REVEREND

SOMERVILLE HAY, A.M.

N.B.—These Sermons are published from rough notes left by Mr. Hay. He never fully wrote his Sermons. He frequently “interpolated in the pulpit,” as he says in his letters; and he had no design whatever to their publication. They are now given to the public, at the request of some attached friends who enjoyed the benefit of his ministry, and are published with scarcely any additions but such trifling ones as the rough and unfinished state of the manuscripts rendered imperatively necessary.

S E R M O N S.

S E R M O N I.

St. Luke xvii. 33.—“Remember Lot’s wife.”

THE history of Lot’s wife takes up very little space in Scripture. A single verse tells it all. “*His wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*”—Gen. xix. 26. Yet that verse records such a singular and awful judgment befalling her that her memorial can never be lost. Amidst the wrecks of the valley of Sodom, the deadly lake that now covers the well-watered, blooming region, so fatally attractive to the eyes of Lot, the barren and blasted district that now meets the traveller’s eye, where once flourished the cities of the plain: Amidst all *there* that tells us what Divine Vengeance *is* when roused, and what it can do, Lot’s wife stands forth, solitary and prominently conspicuous. Indeed, there are no remains of that pillar, no miraculous preservation of it; it was left to melt away; but she has a more abiding memorial in the Word of God than that pillar would ever have been, had it remained.

The inhabitants of the two cities perished in a mass; a common ruin overtook them all. But she has a notoriety of her own. What befel her was a judgment that had to be related distinctly by itself, and lest we should overlook the few simple words in which it is set down—“*his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt*”—our Lord calls attention to it, as an incident to be specially marked and remem-

bered. He has singled it out as an example of great use and value to his people, particularly to his disciples. It is more than a mere fact, to be read, and wondered at, and soon forgotten. We are to stop and ponder, to gather wisdom and warning to ourselves from her strange and melancholy fate. We must *Remember Lot's wife*. We must go back then to the time long past when the events recorded in the 19th of Genesis took place, and without staying to review them all, go up to that pillar which is seen on the plain midway between Sodom and Zoar.

Such a pillar a recent traveller mentions his having seen near the dead sea, but its situation, as well as other circumstances, must prevent its being taken for that into which Lot's wife was turned, no doubt long since melted away. We can only carry ourselves back in imagination to the spot where, although long since vanished, it once so suddenly appeared. With more than mere curiosity, as if it were a natural phenomenon, we approach it, we gaze with awe and silent wonder, for a living woman is cased in that crust of salt.

With her husband and two daughters she hastened from Sodom. On the morning of that city's destruction, four fugitives had issued from its gates, but three only enter Zoar; the missing one is the wife and the mother. Probably she was not missed on the road, for *they* had not dared to look back. Hurrying on, they would take it for granted that she was close behind. For a moment, as they come to a stop within the shelter of Zoar, and for the first time discover she is missing, they might suppose that she was unable to keep up, and doubtless would appear immediately. How anxiously must they look over the plain just passed, anxiety that rapidly becomes alarm and distress; for no one is seen! And even could they have discerned her in the distance, it was now too late to gain the refuge,—for no sooner are the little party safely housed than the storm which had been suspended till they were beyond its reach—breaks forth over the guilty city. "*Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Heaven.*" But *she* who might have been at the very moment joining her

husband and daughters in devout, thanksgiving for deliverance, who might with them have been looking forth from their security with awe and astonishment at the fiery tempest that was overwhelming those they had just left, has been among the first victims on that devoted plain. She had but turned back as they journeyed on, turned for one last look, and on the instant death overtook her,—the living woman stood transfixed to the spot whence that affectionate but fatal glance was cast, and became a pillar of salt.

She too being dead yet speaketh. She has no place in the list of illustrious characters the Apostle has commemorated in 11th of Hebrews; there is no niche among them for her. Theirs is an example to be followed, hers to be shunned. A miserable notoriety for a human being to have. Who would care to be remembered by a bare name,—that it merely should be known such a one once lived? But to be infamous in history, to be set up as a beacon, to be read only for warning and disapproval, that your name and character should be handed down, not in common history, but in the Word of God, the most widely circulated book in the world; for all men in every generation to take warning by; how sad and miserable a commemoration. Such was the fate of this unfortunate woman. Though lost herself, yet she may be the means of saving others. A voice seems to come from that pillar which deserves to be attended to. Let us stand beneath it and hear the counsel it would recommend to us.

1st. It speaks to us in caution—*Beware of forsaking your own mercies.* Lot's wife had many; she had lived with faithful Abraham; her husband was a true servant of God; she had been rescued with him from the five kings who invaded Sodom, and she owed her escape from that place, when its doomsday arrived, to being the wife of the only righteous man it contained. Beside herself and her daughters, not another woman in Sodom had any intimation of what was about to occur, or any opportunity of escape. But she is told; she goes forth before the storm bursts. Angels from Heaven are her conductors, they take her hand and

bring her out, "*the Lord being merciful*," it is expressively added. She is outside the devoted city. There is a refuge for her not far off, prepared and waiting to receive her. Yet she is loth to go, she can see no reason for such hasty departure. Why should they take the word of their two stranger guests of last night, so implicitly as to leave all behind and flee for their lives? There is no sign to be seen of such a judgment as they spoke of; it can be nothing but a dream of their own imagination. The morning has dawned as bright and sunny as morning ever was, it seems absurd to go; reluctant and not half convinced she follows her husband out.

On the way she lags, stops and looks back; but how natural! Some of her children were there, daughters who had married in Sodom, whose husbands when Lot went in to them thought he was mocking. How natural she should cast a lingering look at a place where they had so long lived. Yes—but "*look not*," had been the express injunction, and while she looked her joints suddenly stiffen, her heart ceases to beat, a thick vapour envelopes her, she becomes a pillar of salt. And all this was because she "*forsook her own mercies*." She who might have escaped altogether, died first on that day, which ended the lives of so many thousand souls. They had no *warning*, no *offer*, no *escape* for their lives; she had all.

And assuredly, whoever of us perishes it will be for the same fault, in spite of much done to save us, forsaking our own mercies. Some of yours may be the very same she had, and made so little of. Some may have a providential escape to remember from a violent death, or from severe injury, which nothing but the protection of the powerful arm and watchfulness of a Father's eye warded off. She was thus preserved, and space for repentance given. You may have had your lot cast with those who rejoice to see you taking an interest in divine things, would take you by the hand, and encourage you, instead of those who laugh and sneer at your seriousness, and make a jest of your becoming religious. Such was her's. You may be, or have been, blessed with a pious parent or parents,

who often laid their loving hand on your head, and prayed over you, gave you wise counsel, and, moreover, set before you a good example. Oh! don't think lightly of these blessings. How precious they are! How few possess them!

Have you had messages from Heaven sent home with a peculiar force to your mind: the voice of conscience backed by the pleadings of the Holy Ghost, an awakening and alarming message that will be attended to? So had she. Angels led her forth. She *should* be saved, she *should not* perish in Sodom. If she hangs back, lingers, let her be taken by the hand, and *led* with a strong and sweet compulsion forth. No matter how evident her disinclination to leave, she must be *compelled*. This is *her own* mercy, and she shall not miss it.

Ours are like hers. God *expects* us to be saved, and does not suffer us to be left in ignorance of the world to come, or of the one name by which we can be saved. We are *marked* out amongst the dwellers on the earth for preservation. Millions lie unwarned, know nothing of what is coming. Not so with us. Our hands are laid hold of, the Lord has been merciful. God *commands* us to *take* salvation by his Son. The great condemnation under the Gospel is rejecting—refusing to give ourselves up to be led in the right way, and taken to Heaven by the merits of Jesus Christ. He shews the way. His finger points out the refuge. Jesus Christ is evidently set forth. Our Zoar is not far off. Haste thee, escape thither, is the urgent call of the Spirit, and there is room for all. "*Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.*" How loudly does the fate of this woman, so greatly blessed, yet in vain, say to us, *beware, beware* of forsaking your own mercies, sinning against your own souls.

2nd. Look again at the pillar, listen to its next utterance. It has another lesson to read us. This time it is counsel that she offers, the counsel is, *if you profess to set out for Heaven be sure you take your heart with you.* If you would "*so pass through things temporal as finally not to lose the things eternal,*

'set your affections on things above, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' She can speak feelingly to us on this point. When Lot's wife left Sodom she still loved it, she had pleasing recollections of it. With great reluctance she rose up to follow her husband out of it. There was everything being left—house, goods, and possessions of all sorts, friends, acquaintance, and children, who would not go.

Besides, Zoar, to which she was bound, had no attractions for her. It was exchanging a luxurious and agreeable city, where they had all their comforts, for a little desolate nest in the mountains, whither they would arrive almost destitute. To most eyes Heaven is as unattractive as Zoar was to her, and the world as enchanting as Sodom. No doubt of it, it is a hard thing to have our occupations and business, as we must, with "*things on the earth*," things *visible*, and at the same time to *prefer*, to *like better*, and *value higher*, "*things above*," which we cannot see; to manage our affections so that things *unseen*, that seem *far off*, and *unreal*, that we only know of by *faith* and serious thought, should be our dearest objects. To have the thoughts engaged, as they must be, a great deal about things of earth, and yet not *set* on them, as if you valued them most. This is hard. The fact of the things on the one hand being seen and on the other unseen, would make it so, supposing there were nothing else to do it. But when we add, that instead of any natural desire to go out after these things, the reverse is the tendency of our hearts, that renders it peculiarly hard.

We are no farther on the road to Heaven than our hearts are. You are standing still, notwithstanding all the religious duties you may force yourself to do, if your heart is uninterested, and you cannot relish what is spiritual and eternal,—if it is not *thrown into* those exercises and duties as delightful and congenial employments. All else that may seem leading you thither will not advance you a step if the heart, with its affections, is left behind, fastened down to earth. You have only in appearance left Sodom, if your heart remains there.

It matters little that it is not its *sins*, but its comforts

that detain you there,—that you have no taste for its vices, that you abhor and shun them, and tremble for those who practise them,—if its *lawful enjoyments* and pursuits have stolen your heart from God, and in the good things of earth you are surrounded by, you have all you want. The farm, the oxen, and the merchandize as effectually keep men from following Christ as the vilest lusts. Lot's wife was not a partaker with the sinners of Sodom in their abominations, yet she perished along with them. It was just that she loved too well the things she had there. We are not enough aware what a disguised enemy lies hid in necessary occupations and lawful comforts. Many, who would never be destroyed with the sinners of Sodom, meet their fate with Lot's wife, outside the city, "*not having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,*" but having their hearts choked and filled,—*these* undo them. Look at the pillar, and hear her say, your labour is all lost in attempting to serve two masters; religious exercises and duties all go for nothing—your charities and prayers;—you will never reach Heaven if the treasure of your heart is not there, if Christ and his salvation have not higher attractions for you than all else in the world. In setting out for the Kingdom of Heaven, you must take your heart with you, or you will never reach its gates.

Once more stand beneath this pillar and listen, she has one more admonition to give us, a brief but earnest one. *Persevere, go forward, press on.* How forcibly the admonition comes from that lifeless pillar. No living voice could give it half the weight it has in issuing from that dumb motionless woman, who with such unutterably expressive gestures seems to point to the road on which she could never take another step, and with silent but persuasive eloquence urge the traveller forward. She speaks from her own experience. With what heartfelt earnestness we can imagine her admonishing us. *I*, she says, *I was almost saved*, the doomed city behind, angels leading, *I was thus far on the way to the refuge. I had run well, but here I stopped.* Others went forward, *I lagged behind, a fatal, irresistible longing compelled me to look back. Ye who*

gaze at me with awe as the monument of an unbelieving soul, learn wisdom from my fate, flee till the refuge is reached, follow on, and go the whole way with those who are pressing into the Kingdom of God. Better almost to perish in Sodom than meet such a doom as mine. Seemingly to enter God's service, and actually to have your portion with the world. As if the world had something better to offer, to look back longingly to its attractions, and turn away from the good things prepared for them. This is an insult he cannot brook, "*If any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.*"

There is a line of monuments like Lot's wife, set up in Scripture, each of which confirms her admonition to *persevere* when you begin. Foremost and first in the chain stands that pillar of salt in the vale of Sodom. Farther down is seen *Joash*, the young king of Judah, who did right in the sight of the Lord, all the days that Jehoida the priest lived, but after he was dead, then turned back and perished. Beyond him, *Demas* appears; for a time we hear of him running the race for the prize, hand in hand with Paul, but *his* pillar also stands midway, and his memorial among his former companions is—"Demas hath forsaken us having loved this present world." And innumerable other pillars of less mark are dotted over the plain. Those who came out of Sodom, received the word with joy, ran for a time well and brought forth fruit, but got entangled in the thorns, lost that singleness of purpose and earnestness of aim which "*presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,*" as the one thing needful. They ceased striving against sin, used no violence with themselves, so that the lusts of the flesh entered their hearts, drew them off from Christ and their salvation. And there they stand, their number growing every day to tell us that "*no one having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God,*" and only "*he that endureth unto the end shall be saved.*"

The final lesson from it all is, the *secret of perseverance*; of holding on our way without tiring and looking back. It is in that change of heart which the

Holy Ghost alone can work. Lot's wife had an *unchanged heart*, though she left Sodom and set off for Zoar. God's restraining grace may keep you back from sins which others practise. An enlightened conscience may put you on doing much to save your soul, but only that special grace which renews and converts the heart, giving a new object and interest to its affections, can preserve you along the whole length of your pilgrimage, in faith and patience.

The heart must have a treasure somewhere, something to set its hopes and affections on, something it desires supremely, rests on for its happiness. Wherever that treasure is, *there* will the heart be also. The essence of conversion is, turning the heart away from what it naturally makes its treasure, from setting its affections on things below, to setting them on things above. Your heart *cannot* be *empty*—the world pushes its claims and easily gets a hearing for them, is welcomed and admitted. The Spirit only can dislodge the world and make it give place to a MORE SATISFYING OCCUPANT. Brethren, it is worth while to go up sometimes to that pillar and read there the inscription it carries, to hear the admonitions it can give. Let Lot's wife sometimes preach to you. That stiffened, motionless form has indeed no tongue, utters no sound, but her *position*, her *character*, her *sin*, her *punishment*, preach more eloquently and impressively than any words. Beware of forsaking your own mercies.

If you have set out and hope to reach heaven, take your heart with you—yea, send it on before. Persevere till you have reached the goal. "*Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,*" is her warning voice to all who pass by.

South Lynn, April, 1850.

St. James's, Ryde, 6th March, 1853.

Corrimony, Invernesshire, 1852.

SERMON II.

St. Matt. vii. 22, 23.—“Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.”

SOME of the sternest language of the Bible is uttered by our Saviour. It is his lips that describe with a terrible distinctness and precision, the terrors of Hell—the fewness of the saved—the dreadful punishment of the lost—the difficult way of salvation—and the narrowness of the path to Heaven.

Some people have thought Christ came to modify the law, and to relax the strictness of its requirements, that he came to shew us a path to Heaven smoother and easier than that known before to the world. But our Lord's own language warrants no thought of this kind. God indeed sent him not to condemn the world. Yet he made the strait gate no wider than it had ever been, and the narrow way remains what it always was. It was not his mission or purpose to make any alteration *there*.

God cannot offer salvation to us except on terms consistent with his holiness and justice. While a Saviour he must be a just God. While the blood of his Son makes sufficient atonement for a sinful world, and sinners of every description are urged to return to God by him, it must ever be a fixed standing rule—*“except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* While the errand of mercy that brought Jesus into the world made it consistent for him to receive the worst, and to hold out the arm of welcome to every one that desired to approach him, that same errand of love also drew from his lips words which may well make us tremble, so withering, and at first sight, so disheartening do they appear. But they were not spoken without a cause—the deceitfulness of our hearts called for them; the dangers on either side the path of life, the snares so cunningly laid, into which our blindness would hurry us, forbade the Lord

to refrain warnings—even the tones which seem stern and severe are faithful to souls, and cannot be mistaken. Love and pity dictate plain speaking; *none* can say, they perished for want of a trustworthy guide; none can charge disappointment to being imperfectly warned, or insufficiently directed. None can plead, the beacons meant to shew the perils they had to beware of, were too dim to distinguish.

Among these warnings which the Lord's concern and regard for us drew from his lips, the one read occurs first, and is one of the most alarming announcements made. It is just one of the many lamps hung up to shew the pitfalls in which the unwary may be engulfed,—meant as a friendly beacon to put men on their guard against the hidden rocks on which many thousands strike and perish. It may be, some will say, this is a hard saying, Jesus has not so stern an aspect. But do we not see unfolded here a scene of the Judgment day portrayed, and anticipated, for our learning and admonition. It discloses a numerous company pleading before the Judge, admitted to urge their claims and their services. We hear his unfavourable, and (to them) his unexpected answer. And then, with disappointment and confusion of faces, they vanish into utter darkness, and are seen no more.

We must not let pass this sight and remonstrance as if the whole scene were a mere illusion of the fancy, a spectacle in which we have no personal interest. Who knows how many of us may bear a part in the dreadful reality. Who knows but that here, as in a magic glass, is foreshadowed a situation in which some of us will find ourselves in that day.

Our notice is first called to the plea these persons are described as urging and pleading—saying, "*Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name.*" This, you observe, is a claim on the score of services rendered during their lives on earth. It would appear that these persons have taken much interest in the cause of God, and materially forwarded it. They speak of their usefulness in upholding and maintaining religion.

It is clear that theirs is not the idle, careless, and indifferent sort of christianity, of which the world is

so full. Great things are done by them, both towards God and man. Some, for instance, may have suffered much, and even may have sacrificed their lives for their religion. Some were favoured with those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon the Church in the first days, which communicated the power of prophesying, casting out devils, and speaking in unknown tongues. Others can say, we have eaten and drank in thy presence, we have always professed to be thy followers, and we were considered as such in the world; we laboured for the gospel, we gave our time, our money, and our efforts to promote it.

Such is their plea, and there is this to be said for it, that it is not a *false* one; all their urging is true, it is borne out by facts, the opened books give testimony to their accuracy and truth. They recall these things to our Lord's remembrance, in perfect confidence that he will not gainsay. They appeal to him, whether they have not done many good works, and the Lord does not deny that they have. He makes no question of the *truths* they allege. His reply is not, ye never did such things; nor does he charge them with attempts to impose—with a tale of services never rendered. More than this, it is not an exaggerated plea, the case is not overstated, nor too highly coloured. The gifts of which they speak they once really possessed, the wonders which they mention they actually performed. Their zeal, activity, and pains-taking are undeniable. Contrasted with what others can say of themselves, how forcible and sufficient does this plea of theirs appear. The best that numbers will be able to urge in their behalf, as to the character of what was done in this life, is—they were harmless, amiable, good-hearted, they injured none, and they were not guilty of gross sins; but what was this, to being able to say, "*we prophesied in thy name?*" Or even those who had something more substantial to mention, religious as well as moral, who would urge, in proof of being God's servants, and not Satan's, that they had kept the commandments, were constant worshippers at God's House, regular guests at his table, had prayer in their households, kept the Sabbath day carefully,

and habitually read his Word. How much does even this fall below the plea in the text. If you think *duties* prove a relation to Christ, how much more *services*!

We have no difficulty in distinguishing the persons by whom this plea is urged. We do not of course look for them among the profane and careless. *They*, instead of coming boldly forward, are trying to shrink out of sight, covering their faces, and invoking the rocks to fall upon them. Neither do we find those who answer correctly to this description among the number of those who had a form of godliness, and made some profession of knowing and serving God. *Their* plea is but a negative one at best, the most they can say is they did no harm. Some duties they performed, but they rendered no services, they were never energetic and zealous for religion. But these persons, on the contrary, can and do plead—with perfect truth, that, being professors of christianity, they set forward the cause of God. They took great interest in its affairs, and were thought very highly of for their works' sake. This is their plea. Now how is it treated? It is no sooner made than the Lord's rejection of it follows. "*Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.*" He altogether refuses to receive it, casts it aside as worth nothing, makes no account of it at all. After listening to all they are so anxious to urge, and on which they evidently rely so much, this is his immediate reply.

And is nothing really to be made of such things as these? Hath not Christ said my reward is with me? Shall not a man reap what he has sown? And are prophesyings, and casting out devils, and working miracles, so worthless, that they are overlooked, set aside, and forgotten? I might then almost as well renounce religion entirely as an impracticable thing—as well cease troubling myself with its duties, and striving to do some things useful to the church, when my labours are vain, when for all I may perchance get nothing but a harsh and fatal repulse. I may even go such lengths as these did, be as persevering and zealous as they were, and yet find it profit absolutely nothing. It may have, at a first glance, a disheartening aspect,

from this severe and unexpected sentence,—to see a confidence that to the natural eye looks well founded, unspared, cut up by the roots—to see a title that seems so valid, put aside as hopelessly bad—to hear a plea so much stronger than thousands can urge *rejected*, as untenable, might make one ready to exclaim—“*who then can be saved?*” But when you notice the reasons given, there is no just cause to wonder longer at the Lord’s reply. They make quite plain the insufficiency of pleas, though apparently so irresistible, and the justice of the sentence, though seemingly so harsh.

The Lord gives, as one reason, that he fails to recognise these persons as his own peculiar charge and people, he does not see his mark—they are not of his fold—he declares no acquaintance with them—they are strangers—“*I know you not.*” How does this come to pass when they have done so many miracles in his name—how comes the Lord not to know such zealous servants as these proved themselves to be? Because he does not see that in them, without which none can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven! We have seen what these persons *have*, but now we must see what they *want*. They want that gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes a sinner’s nature new, and Godlike. They can boast indeed of extraordinary gifts which God endowed them with, and of works they have done for him, but these, after all, are no more than rare jewels, which may *adorn* the person, but do not change its nature, or give it health. They want that Divine Spirit which makes the *soul itself a jewel*, which breaks up the depths of the heart, cleanses its secret chambers, pulls down favourite idols, and engages it for God. They fell into the mistake of supposing that their gifts and doings, were plain proofs of their being Christ’s people. They thought themselves converted, because they had done such and such things. Now do we not all need such a warning as is given here, against a mistake like this? What a fatal error to suppose any number of duties performed, any services done, any gifts bestowed, any knowledge, however extensive, or impressions, however lively, can constitute the sap

and marrow of the religion of Christ, or bring a person up any further than to the suburbs and gates of the Kingdom of Heaven. These performances cannot necessarily prove that any belong to the Church of God. They *may* be nothing more than the compliance of an enlightened conscience. Certainly these things look well, they have an imposing aspect, and many think, here is all that is required—they can meet God's demands if they can thus plead with truth. So once thought the Apostle Paul; and he would have shipwrecked himself on this rock, by his confidence in the flesh, had he not learnt in time to count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord!

See another ground of their rejection—"depart from me ye that work iniquity." They had all the appearance of being workers of righteousness, for such they passed before man, who looks only on the outward appearance, and such, too, they considered themselves. But those piercing eyes, like a flame of fire, detect a deficiency. They want *personal godliness*! Nothing makes up for this. Balaam prophesied and heard—but loved the wages of unrighteousness. Jehu was zealous—but took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord. The Jews loved to listen to Jesus—Judas healed the sick, and preached the Gospel—The young ruler kept outwardly the commandments, but lacked the one thing needful.

Sincerity—evangelical sincerity—is everything with God. I don't mean natural sincerity, a native ingenuousness, nor moral sincerity, which is opposed to downright hypocrisy. No. People may not be hypocrites, and yet they may be wofully and ruinously self-deceived. Evangelical sincerity is the needful thing. Many are large and liberal in their bounty, hoping their charities will outweigh their sins. Many have done great things and made themselves conspicuous by their apparent zeal, from love of praise, or to push themselves on in the church. Many have submitted to severe sufferings who yet were not sincere, the love of God not being the ruling principle. "*All their works they do to be seen of men.*" But

the Lord seeth not as man seeth. He looketh at the heart, he cares for no services, labours, gifts, or sufferings, independent of the motive; he stands in no need of them, and values them only as they come from a pure heart.

There may be—and, indeed, is—in the best, much imperfection and much corruption, often stirring and disquieting the heart; but if any true love of God be there, it makes him and his ways dear for his own sake; he then accepts what is rendered to him. It is the want of sincere attachment which causes rejection, whatever great things may be done; for until a right spirit is formed within us, till we partake of the saving grace of God, whatever wonderful works we have done, we still remain guilty and lost beings.

We are left to imagine for ourselves, in conclusion, the bitter disappointment with which this rejection is received—its terrible and overwhelming effect. We are not told of its extent. It must be, for one thing, *so entirely unexpected*; it must take them so by surprise. All through life their hopes have been held up by things which the Judge makes no account of when pleaded. It evidently has never entered into their minds such claims as theirs could be rejected, or that religion manifested by such works could be considered unsound. Happy would it have been for them had they but looked to the fountain from whence their best works flowed, if they had examined carefully whether their natures were changed, and the love of God planted in their hearts—if it was that, and not ambition, or self-interest, that prompted all they did. Happy if they had remembered eternal life is connected, not with great gifts, and great doings, but with the possession of a holy nature, like that of Jesus Christ! But this escaped them—this they took no account of. They had been esteemed through life—gone to the grave in quiet—and go to judgment in security—and then the vail drops off!—then the reality stares them in the face. They know the truth about themselves at last. On the threshold of eternity their hope has vanished. The first words of Jesus are its knell. Oh woeful discovery! terrible exposure! unlooked for

reception! Instead of come ye blessed—depart ye cursed. Instead of well done good and faithful servants—depart from me ye workers of iniquity. Instead of being recognised as faithful, sincere disciples—to meet the cold repulse, I never knew you. Instead of being greeted as children—treated as strangers. Expecting to see God come forth with smiles, and meet him as their friend,—and to see him clothed in anger as their enemy. How unexpected a disappointment is this, and so irreparable—no going back to remedy the mistake—no starting afresh, to be wiser and more cautious—no new venture for the prize. On earth we hardly know what an irreparable disappointment is, one that leaves the mind utterly without anything to give comfort. The heart may be deeply wounded; it is not often completely broken. Time brings its alleviations, hope revives. But once disappointed of entrance to Heaven, no reparation remains for it. An error there is fatal. As long as we are here, steps may be retraced that have gone astray; but once across the gulph, sowing time is ended—the journey is finished—the harvest is reaped, whatever it is.

We have now seen how unlooked for, and how irreparable is the doom,—now let us look, lastly, at the numbers involved. *Many*—and this is why this case presses itself on our notice, and demands the attention of us all. The Lord does not use words at random, and he distinctly affirms, *very many* are thus disappointed. Let us be thankful for the faithfulness that gives timely warning, and grateful for the discovery of a melancholy and disheartening scene, all may witness, but God forbid we should any of us bear a part in it! The contemplation of this sad *disappointment*, and the *numbers* that feel it, call upon us loudly to study, so that we may understand aright the nature of Christ's religion. Most persons think they understand it tolerably well, especially if religiously educated. Just see how much these who were interested, and had taken it up, mistook its real character. It is something more than they, with all their claims, were found to possess. We discern in them how far the influence of example, or education—the

love of praise, and the spirit of self-righteousness—the common upbraidings of conscience—may carry people in the profession of religion, and yet leave them without the reality in their possession. If your religion, brethren, is of a right kind, you have some spiritual sense of God, as to his glory, the infinite excellency of his nature, and the excellence of his laws;—some keen and abasing sense of yourselves as sinful, ruined, utterly undone, as quite unworthy, and corrupt at heart; you will then also have some heart confidence and reliance on the Saviour, as One by whom you are encouraged to return to God, whose blood brings you nigh, some degree of renewal of soul by the Holy Spirit, which never is given to serve self, but which makes your desires consecrated to Christ, and constrains you to feel your obligation to walk worthy of your vocation. All this begins when God's saving grace first visits the soul, and it grows stronger and stronger.

If you fear or suspect your religion has hitherto consisted too exclusively in outward duties and performances, begin anxiously to search the heart for the love of God, for the evidences and proofs of true contrition, hatred of, and mighty struggle against, all sin, and humility. When once you understand what is the religion Christ will own—*get it*. Neither make it for yourself, nor copy it from others, but seek it from God. Buy for yourselves—“*buy wine and milk without money and without price.*” “*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*” Put your heart into God's hands as beyond your own power to set in order, that he may write in it his laws, and shed abroad abundantly his love there.

We shall be without excuse if *we* mistake the way of life, and are found among the disappointed ones. Their disappointment will meet with no pity because they might have avoided it, had they listened to Christ's voice within, and to wisdom crying without—instead of following their own ideas. They might have been spared this misery and shame had they seen that a broken heart lies at the foundation of genuine godliness, and that when this is wanting, Christ values nothing else.

SERMON III.

Matthew vi. 24.—“Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

You must have observed in our Lord's public addresses what decided peremptory language he uses when describing the nature of his service, and laying down terms of discipleship. You must have noticed, that interspersed among the benevolent and gracious utterances that flowed from his lips, are some that *appear* to be *hard sayings*, little calculated, one would think, to win upon men's minds, more likely to check than to encourage, any who were disposed to enlist themselves on his side.

The text is a specimen of the tone the Lord often adopted when speaking on this subject. It has all the character of a stern uncompromising saying. It goes straight to the point. It is a plain unvarnished way of stating the case, in direct contrast to that which you would suppose it the policy of any one to employ who merely sought to gain followers. We will consider then how this language, apparently so unsuitable, so repelling, was likely to further the object of gathering disciples round him. Let us observe how *wise*, how appropriate, how *necessary*, were these broad statements, this peremptory tone, this close and direct dealing with the consciences and hearts of men.

To see this, notice *First*, in the language of the text, *how well calculated such statements are to make thorough converts*. What decided and true hearted disciples may be expected to rally round a standard so boldly unfurled. It is evidently no part of our Saviour's plan to win a crowd of mere nominal followers. He would not have presented himself to the Jews as the carpenter's son, taking no pains to conceal his lowly birth and connections, while claiming to be their promised Messiah, if *that* had been *his* object. He never resorts to any temporising schemes to promote his purpose. He prefers a few

thorough and intelligent disciples to a mixed multitude, whom his miracles, or the novelty and authority of his teaching, might collect in curiosity or vague astonishment around him. He wants something more than the *name* enrolled in his service, and the outward bodily attendance upon him. *That*, when nothing more is given, he rather represses and drives away, as a sort of homage for which he has no relish and no desire. "*Ye seek me*," he said once to the thronging multitudes, "*because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled*."

What he wants is *the whole man*, the *entire heart* for his own. And aiming at this, no adherence from secondary motives satisfies him; and, therefore, in bringing men round his standard, and inviting them to become his disciples, their motives and feelings are taken into consideration, and it is plainly intimated that he sets no value on mere numbers, whom a hard saying may, at any moment drive away, or persecution arising may offend, or a temptation from the opposite quarter presenting itself may seduce. And then as the best and most certain way of obtaining this,—to ensure, as far as possible, that none should, in ignorance, or without due deliberation, enlist under him, he plainly tells all his disciples what will befall them.

When the master of Israel comes by night, anxious for instruction from this new teacher, he is not caught at as a prize to be secured on any terms; one who, from his rank and weight, would in some measure forward the cause, one, therefore, whom it would be well not to startle by any premature, too explicit, declaration of what a disciple must be prepared for. There meets him at the very outset of his inquiries, the unpromising declaration, however little he may comprehend or relish it, that, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

When a young ruler, separating himself from the class he belongs to, that stands afar off in unbelief and contempt, comes running, more bold than Nicodemus, to cast himself, in presence of a thousand spectators, at Christ's feet, while the inward sentiment of the Saviour towards him is *love*, as to one *not far* from

the kingdom of Heaven, the language that falls on his ear seems calculated to check his eagerness,—“*Why callest thou me good! there is none good but one, that is God.*” And when he has told his story, and asked, doubtless, with ingenuous simplicity and seeming real desire—“*What lack I yet?*”—instead of the approbation he would look for, the encouraging, flattering words that shall bid him persevere in his course, and add some requirements that may satisfy,—how stern, how unexpected is the warning,—“*One thing thou lackest,—if thou would'st be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven.*”

And again, when a candidate for discipleship presents himself, apparently in good faith, and with a mind seemingly made up,—“*Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,*”—it is no welcome that greets him, no encouraging, approving words that might confirm his choice; but the answer from one who could read the heart, was chilling and dispiriting, “*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head.*”

But there was, of course, in this mode of treatment, a *design* in view, and we are at no loss to understand it. It is to collect those, and those only, as disciples, who have weighed the terms and counted the cost. This language, so harsh and repelling, is it really meant to *discourage* men from entering the path of life? those severe sayings—“*If any man come unto me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple,*”—are they intended to limit the number of the Lord's followers to a select few, to intimate that he has no desire for many to join his standard;—those strange, hard words (as they seemed to the Jews),—“*Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you,*”—and other kindred ones; are they meant to nip in the bud the inclination just felt, to become his disciples,—are they uttered just to cause the murmuring and dissatisfaction which the speaker knew they would excite? No.

We can account for them on better grounds than these. When the terms of service are fairly stated, men will enter it with their eyes open, and well aware of the demands made upon them. When the difficulties of the way are pointed out, those who set out are not expecting a smooth and easy path. When the cost is counted before the tower is begun, there is a better prospect of its being completed. Thus the Lord would have us weigh well what it is we are undertaking, before we give ourselves up to his service. He announces so plainly and impressively that no man can serve two masters, that it may be, with deliberation, as those taking a definite step, that we give in our adherence, and declare that we will serve the Lord, for an apostate, or lukewarm follower, is of all, most utterly offensive to him,—“*If any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.*” Let me then consider if I have taken his vows with this deliberation, if, as he advises, I have counted the cost. I find myself indeed already enrolled as a member of his church, admitted by baptism to the privileges and prospects of his disciples, an assumed heir to the inheritance prepared and kept for the children of God. But in setting my own hand to this engagement, testifying to it as my own act and deed, accepting the position with its advantages and its responsibilities, with what forethought was it, what sagacious discernment of the difficulties of the undertaking, the trials of the service?—“*No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other,*”—the terms are thus broadly laid down that there may be no misapprehension,—“*Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*” It is so peremptorily stated, that in choosing God’s service, we may consider ourselves tied to him as sole master.

But before you thus commit yourself, would it not be well, even though “*Godliness is profitable for all things,*” to count the cost. What is it about religion that attracts you? Why will you serve the Lord? Is it the overwhelming force of his claim, who has bought you? Are you really convinced the advantages of his service outweigh those of mammon?

Does the love of Christ constrain you? Does the purity of heart, the poverty of spirit, the deadness to the world, the cross-bearing involved, charm and win you? Are the terms not too austere?—"Take up your cross daily,"—"forsake all and follow me." Do you keep them before your eyes? Will you take God on his own terms? Is it that heavenly service is really congenial to your tastes? Would you rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness? Can you honestly prefer God to mammon?

Such questions the Saviour's language is calculated to raise, tending both to repress a too forward and inconsiderate eagerness, and to reprove an indolent acquiescence in the position we find ourselves in as visible members of his church;—demanding a thorough investigation into the requirements made upon us, and leading us to examine ourselves and see if we *have heartily taken up* the Lord's service, for it is only such religion that will be likely to stand the trial and endure unto the end. If, when a temptation comes, you are unresistingly to yield to it, when a cross is in your path, you are to step aside, or murmur at it; if, when a worldly sacrifice is demanded by religious principle, you are to refuse it; if this is to be the quality of your religion, if this is to be the rule and measure of your obedience to God, that you obey when it costs you nothing,—can you think that in Heaven you will taste its pleasures, when you shrink here from all its pains? Nay, Christ must be taken for better and worse. He deals faithfully by us—does not magnify the attractions of his service—does not dwell upon the rewards reserved for his servants, and keep out of sight the demands, hard and severe to a corrupt nature, made upon them here. Glory, honour, and immortality are in the distance, and gild the horizon brightly—but between is, not indeed a gulf, for that has been bridged over, but a strait path, a cross, a denial of self, a crucifixion of the flesh, that all must encounter in their way thither.

Secondly.—Besides being suited to make thorough disciples, by causing deliberation and prudently counting

the cost, *the Saviour's language in the text is also calculated to promote decision, and put an end to wavering and hesitation.* It is so peremptory that the choice must be made on one side or the other—a compromise is out of the question—“*No man can serve two masters.*” It does not, however, prevent a great many of us from *trying* to do so, and some seem to imagine that they have found the golden mean, fathomed the secret, discovered the happy art of so blending these antagonistic elements, reconciling these opposite interests, that what our Lord declared impossible, may be easily and safely done.

There is a delusive security felt, then, which makes people anxious to persuade themselves that there is a way, and they have found it, of serving both God and mammon—for if, it is said, on the one hand, I am keen and eager after this world, imbued with its spirit, its gains or pleasures,—if I give it the best of my thoughts, and time, and affections,—still, on the other hand, religion has its niche, its proper place and attention. God has his due. I do not defraud him of his rightful worship; I keep his commandments to the letter; and thus I can harmoniously further two interests, and serve two masters. Without renouncing the *world*, I can serve God to the full extent of what he may reasonably claim;—without renouncing *religion*, I can live for the world, and give my chief thoughts and affections to what naturally attracts and absorbs them. Thus half-hearted disciples secretly reason.

The text strikes directly at this fatal, seductive halting,—“*Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*” How can you yield at once to two forces that pull you different ways? How give scope to the affections and impulses of two natures which are contrary to one another, the flesh lusting against the spirit? How can you listen, on the one hand, to a voice that appeals to earthly principles and passions, stirs up ambition, pride and sensuality; and at the same time give full weight and credence to another voice that whispers, “*Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.*” “*If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*” You cannot thus vibrate between

them. You *must* incline to one or the other, truly, and without exaggeration. If you hold to the one, you must despise the other.

Now the Lord would bring us to the point, and force us to a decision of whom we will serve; and you observe that, in aiming at this, he places the two services in direct opposition—contrasts the two masters as utterly irreconcilable in the nature of their demands. Far from seeking to win us over to a heavenly master, by showing that his demands are consistent with a good deal of service to another, he cuts up by the roots our cherished notion that there is a possibility of dividing our affections between the two—living for the world and for God together—he declares it plainly *impossible*—a compromise cannot be attempted,—and he shuts us up to a *choice*, to choose as between two quite opposite interests—between *time* and *eternity*; whether you will have good things now, or wait; whether you will be with God or against him; whether you will mind the things of the flesh, or the things of the spirit.

You can see how well calculated such a plain and intelligible statement is to bring about this decisiveness of choice. "*No man can serve two masters*,"—how calculated to check all hollow and fruitless profession—to put a stop to trifling and hesitation—to lead to a serious weighing of both sides—the offers and the consequences. Shall I labour for the meat that perisheth, or seek the things that are above,—acknowledge the Lord's claims and bow to his authority, or behave as if he were at my disposal, and meant to take what I was inclined to yield him? Shall I live like one who has his all in this world, and seeks to fill and content himself with its good things, or rather aim at passing through it as a stranger to whom all its attractions can have but a transient interest,—journeying towards heaven, "*looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*?" For I must do one or the other; while I halt between two opinions, God disowns me, he is not with me; the world, too, protests against my neutrality, despising the middle course. I am attempting an impossibility;

I can be the servant of only *one* master—to that one, whoever he be, I stand or fall.

Thirdly.—There is a gracious aspect in these words, austere and peremptory as in one point of view they may appear. They are fitted to check and repress all hasty and inconsiderate discipleship—to recommend a due counting the cost, with the view of drawing a band of thorough and devoted followers, who have not crossed the rubicon without due deliberation of the consequences.

They are calculated also, by the strong and firm denial (no man) to bring matters to a crisis, making it very evident that God scorns and rejects our service, if the world or any other master share it with him. The Lord has no need to persuade and entice by flattering representations. When the people ran eagerly, saying, "*We will serve the Lord,*" the prophet exclaims, "*Ye cannot.*" What seemingly ill-timed, unwise, unseasonable language this—ye cannot. Why does he not encourage, commend them, on their ready offering? Does he want to damp their zeal? No. It was all to give them the impression, such as Christ would give us, that it is a serious thing to serve him, of which the consequences and liabilities must be duly weighed.

But the words have also a gracious aspect—they are calculated to promote an unreserved trust and dependance on God, on the part of his servants—"Ye cannot serve God and mammon," "*therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, &c.*" No thought—none of that which carries with it disquiet and distrust. No thought so constant as that taken about spiritual things—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,"—thrown, as it were, into the bargain. He who will take God as his master, has directions to mind chiefly his eternal well-being, and the life of the body shall be taken care of for him. A new channel is pointed out for his anxieties and thoughts to flow in. Let them be mainly, how "*to pass through things temporal so as finally not to lose the things eternal,*"—how to obtain an abundant entrance into the king-

dom of Heaven,—how to get the meat that endureth. Let his thoughts about this life—and he must needs have many—be without carefulness, and without covetousness, for “*godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,*” and that God will never leave his servant.

Thus, when we have counted the cost, and decided to follow Christ, this is his gracious direction and assurance to his servant—Thou wouldest renounce the covetous desire of the world, and choose thy portion among better things; thou wouldest lay hold, not on uncertain riches, but on eternal life; therefore, I say unto thee, make that the one thing needful—all these that your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of, shall be added unto you. Take thou no anxious thought—do the business of thy life, thy worldly calling, with an unanxious mind; beware of fretting, gloomy, forecasting thoughts, “*what shall we eat?*” &c. “*I will bless the labour of thy hands.*” “*Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*”

On the whole, observe—*it is a reasonable service the Lord desires us to choose.* His servants are to bear his yoke and burden—the same that was imposed on him when he came down from heaven to do the will of his Father—and though in bearing them he required to make himself of no reputation, to become a curse, to *humble* himself unto death, he still says, it is *easy and light*. That was because he bore it willingly. It was his meat and drink to finish the work allotted to him. It is only when we have thus *learnt of him*, that we can view God’s service as a yoke that is easy—a burden that is light,—till then, it is intolerable and repulsive, a weary, gloomy servitude.

Those who are drawn, come to Jesus and learn of him; then the real liberty of his service is at last perceived. When you see how he bore his yoke, how, as the Father gave him commandment so he did, and become one with him, you will have the *really* intolerable burden taken off. Acquiesce, then, in the justice and truth of the declaration—“*Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*” No longer be bent on attempting it,

—you must try no longer the plan of a divided allegiance.

The Lord will not veil the crosses and trials of his service; he wants no servants but willing, grateful, and sincere ones, who shall assume, with full knowledge of what they are doing, the badge of subjection. He has a mode of winning them, sure and infallible, by which he secretly and irresistibly draws them,—“*Come unto me,*” “*Learn of me,*” and in taking *my yoke* and my burden, ye shall surely find what ye have been seeking elsewhere in vain—“*rest unto your souls.*”

St. James', Ryde, January, 1853.

SERMON IV.

1 John ii. 29, and iii. 1, 2, 3.—“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

THE Apostle treats in these verses of relationship to God. He first describes what may be taken as a proof and evidence of being related: “*If we know that he is righteous, we know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*” The child will be like the father. A man altogether unlike God, who is opposed to God’s ways and thoughts and judgment, cannot be born of him,—he is God’s creature, not his child. Then he turns to the source and origin of the relationship: he sees the cause of our being adopted by God as his children, not in some special worth which he had discovered, or a special claim, but entirely in the Father’s love,—“*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon*

us, that we should be called the sons of God." How unexpected a dignity! How honourable to be God's relations! How strange that God should love us!

He passes on to describe the future prospects of those who are God's relations. For these he looks forward in the second clause,—"*Beloved, now are we the sons of God;*" and that is something; but we are away from home, not in the Father's house, the corruptible has not yet put on incorruption;—but "when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

And he winds up with reminding the sons what becomes them, where their present duty lies, seeing they enjoy this hope,—"*Every one that hath this hope in him (in Christ, not in himself) purifieth himself even as he is pure.*" Let us take the words as they stand. We have to consider—

First.—Who has this hope of seeing Christ as he is? "*Every one that hath it, purifieth himself;*"—but who hath it? Whose possession is it? Who is entitled to look forward hopefully to the coming of Christ? To whom is it that that glorious appearing is a *blessed* hope? They who have a right to hope are the sons, exclusively his children—none but they are justified in indulging it—none but they can really enjoy its comforts—it is a jewel only in their possession, it lodges in their hearts alone. The hope of eternal life is the exclusive right and privilege of those whose nature is changed. For as long as people live after the flesh, they mind the things of the flesh—the principle of their life is *sense*—what they can see, what they can reach here—they mind nothing beyond—they are not capable of receiving the things of the Spirit, that principle of faith which looks at the things that are unseen.

What is a son's warrant for expecting to inherit his Father's estates and possessions? That he is his Father's son. That is a rational, well-founded expectation; his relationship justifies and ensures it to him. And so the only rational expectation we can have of inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven, being heirs of God, must arise from being able to prove an undoubted

relationship. If we can prove that we are God's children, then we may warrantably hope and expect to see God's glory.

But you must ascertain that first—not by appealing to your standing in his church as baptized members, or your profession as servants of his son—but by what you can bring to light of God's work on your inmost nature, and traces of his image in your heart. If you have ground for thinking that there is friendship and agreement between God and you, you are entitled to hope that, having begun a change, he means to carry it on, and bring you finally to himself. But to talk of having hope in God for the next life, without showing the behaviour of a dutiful and affectionate child in this, is an intrusion upon the birthright and peculiar privilege of others—an infatuation which devils laugh at, and which angels pity.

Hope for nothing from God till you have yielded yourself to him, acknowledged his claims, taken his yoke, and find by your altered disposition, the new wish your heart feels to please God, your changed thoughts about holiness and sin, that you have received the adoption of sons. *Then hope, as your duty, your high privilege, your right.* Abound in hope and rejoice—hope *confidently*, because, as God's child you have a *right*, a clear title to the inheritance. Hope *cheerfully*, for it is God that cannot lie who promises; and your chief comfort, when disquieted and cast down, must spring from hope in the goodness of God. But till then, till your altered dispositions, and tempers, and lives prove that you have received the Spirit of adoption, better be without hope than hold it as a lie in your right hand. Hope first in God's mercy to you as a sinner, to put you among his children, and then hope in his mercy to you as a child, to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Thus, in the first place, every one that hath this hope in him, is a son of God.

We come next to the hope itself. What does he hope for, and what does it rest on? It waits for the fulfilment of the promise. God has promised his son a reward of souls for the things that he suffered—"that

they may be with him ;" and Christ has told it out in the world, that every one who comes unto him he will be glad to receive—that he will give to those who come, eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of his hand. On this his servants rest their hope. Their master gave himself to death for them, he endured their penalty, paid their debt, purchased them for himself, reconciled them to God: because he hath done this, and drawn them to him, and united them to himself, they hope to see him presently appear, and to be made like him. They love his appearing, and look for it, because it will fulfil their best hopes—they believe that he is coming again. *That* coming, to which some are indifferent, and others dead, *they* look out for till the time arrives—they *hope* for it. This is the *nature* of their hope—it has reference to things not seen—things to which faith gives a substance and reality. Hence, scripture speaks of a *door* of hope opening, as it were, out of a dark maze into clear daylight—and an *anchor* of hope, staying and steadying the soul in a storm—and a *helmet*, securing the wearer. A contrast, therefore, in both respects, to the hope of those who are not the true children of God. Theirs is different in its nature. The hope of a wicked or worldly man is not to see God, but to escape damnation. Heaven has no attractions for him, but hell has its terrors. When he talks of his *hopes*, he is thinking far more of what he may *escape* than of what he will *enjoy*—less that he will be *saved* than *not lost*; and it is very plain why his hopes take this turn—why his is more a hope of what he will *not suffer*, than of what he will *enjoy*. That which draws out the hope of God's sons, and makes them wish the Lord would come, gives him no idea of *happiness, dignity, or joy*. He cannot figure to himself much real pleasure anywhere but on earth—"to be like Christ" does not meet his idea of the *fulness of joy*. Little is it to him *where* Christ is, or what he is; all he wants the Saviour for is to save him from hell. That is all his hope. But the hopes of God's children are centred in the appearing of their elder brother in glory—to see Him is what they long for.

That is one point of the contrast; the other we may

see in the different *grounds* they have of hope. The sons of God ground theirs on the sacrifice of Christ for them—their hope is *in him*—he gave himself for them; hence their hope, to be like him, is what they wait for. And what makes them hope for this, above all? Because they have *already*, here on earth, such glimpses (faint and dim, it is true, yet real) of the blessedness of glory, that they can imagine no higher happiness than to see it clearly and partake of it; for God hath shined in their hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. When he appears, they will say, this is our God; and he will receive them as his own. But the others rest their hope on a different foundation—they hope God will not keep his word—that he will repent and change his mind—that there will be more mercy shown at the last day than is supposed. This is the anchor of *their* soul, anything but sure and steadfast, one not reaching within the veil, not taking fast hold of unseen realities. It has not a word of promise to warrant it; holding, in fact, by nothing! a mere imagination of their own minds—a fancy—a delusion—a lie!

Thirdly.—The effect of hope in Christ in every one that hath it, is, that he "*purifieth himself*." If he did not, he would soon lose it. Let him cease pursuing after godliness—allow his corrupt nature to get the upper hand—and his hope must die—he cannot keep its light and joy. Mark how wide its purifying influence extends, how powerfully it acts on those who really have it.

It has, first, a *restraining* influence; every one is purified by the restraint it makes him put upon himself. The grace of God teacheth us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, and by what motive? Ungodliness and worldly lusts are strong things, and have a mighty power over us—bind us in chains—the whole world goes after them. *Ungodliness* is our natural disposition, and *worldly lusts* the desire of our hearts. To draw them away—make us turn our backs on sin—must be a very strong attraction. This is the way grace teaches us—not by just telling us we must—

terrifying us by threats if we do not—but putting us in the attitude of expectation—bidding us turn our eyes towards heaven: “*Look,*” saith the grace, “*for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*”

Those who are denying worldly lusts as they present themselves, putting restraint on corruptions, struggling to keep down evil passions, and bad tempers, and wicked thoughts,—what sustains you, incites you to do so, and to go on, though you find it such up-hill work? Hope. It is not the mere command of God; we want something more animating than a command, when the struggle is daily, the conflict life-long; though there is seldom a command of God without a promise with it, to carry us on—“*Sell all that thou hast, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.*” “*If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out—if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off—it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*”

It is our nature to be more affected by the hope of good things than by the fear of evil; the restraining influence of hope is stronger than that of fear. The one is Joseph, successfully resisting temptation: the other is Achan, losing the dread of threats, in his eagerness to possess the wedge of gold. The one is *Moses*, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;—the other is *Balaam*, only restrained by fear.

It is not when the fear of Divine anger is your chief reason for not yielding to the devil, that you are best guarded against the evil one. Our first mother, Eve, may tell us that satan soon sweeps this barrier away, with the whisper—“*thou shalt not surely die.*” There is a far surer preservative against sin—it is hope, presenting a more valuable consideration, for which it is worth while to resist and conquer.

Hope, taking courage from the recollection that “*the time is short,*”—“*the night is far spent,*”—“*the Lord is at hand,*”—that strengthens us to live soberly, honestly, and godly. Others “*think it strange that ye run not with them, to the same excess of riot;*”—so it

would be, were it not for a hope of things not seen as yet. No one will ever hold out to the end without hope; he may run well for a time—keep the path of God's commandments for a little way—but the restraining influence will fail—his hands hang down—temptations will discourage him—if there is not a living spring of hope in his soul. We can only keep ourselves in the love of God, by looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark, *Secondly*, its *subduing influence*. They seem hard terms the Lord lays down:—“*Whosoever will come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me.*” “*If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off—if thy right eye, pluck it out.*” “*Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple.*”

Are any followers likely to be found on such conditions? “*We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses,*” testifying that it is worth a man's while to deny himself—to bring his body into subjection—to mortify its evil deeds—to take up his cross, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began. *Self-will*, that strong and stubborn principle, gives way only before the mighty influence of hope. We never yield ourselves cordially to God, and say from the heart “*thy will be done,*” till we are persuaded it is the best thing we can do; that it is committing our souls to a faithful Creator. It is not by just proving to me that virtue is better than vice, that I shall ever cease to do evil and learn to do well; it is not simply telling me I ought to do this, and ought not to do *that*, that will subdue my corrupt inclinations and conquer my evil passions. The heart, the will, and the affections are all inveterately prejudiced against God, and all strongly bent the other way. They are not to be influenced and swayed by mere lessons of morality, that virtue is to be practised, and vice avoided,—there must be a far stronger consideration employed to subdue them. *Hope* is the engine by which they must be attacked. Take it away, and see the effects: “*there is no hope,*” said the Jews, therefore, “*we will walk after our own*

devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart."

One more particular we may notice in which this hope purifies, which it does by its sustaining power. Hope is nourishment to the soul; supplies it continually with something to feed on; provides it something to look forward to. "*Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods.*" What will reconcile them to that? "*knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.*"

Abraham sojourns in a strange land—is not mindful of the country from whence he came out—cares little where he is—looks on himself as a stranger, because he is seeking a country, a better, a heavenly one—"looking for a city that hath foundations." He has not only heard of its existence, but is assured that it is his. He is satisfied to know that his seed shall inherit the promised land; for himself he is contented that his *own* inheritance should be put off till the eternal state, and waives his earthly prospects in hope.

There are the eleven Apostles, forsaking all, hazarding all, rejoicing to suffer shame. Hope is sustaining them; their master hath said—"I appoint unto them a kingdom," "I go to prepare a place for you." And so every one who hath this hope is buoyed up, comforted, and made content with any portion now, because he lives for the things that are unseen,—he sees worthier objects of love among them, than he finds here. He waits for his good things hereafter, and neither desires nor expects them here. "*In the world ye shall have tribulation;*" and if there were nothing beyond it, Christ's disciples would be most infatuated and miserable. But to them there opens a door of hope, through which they see, though dimly, darkly as in a glass, enough to make their burdens bearable, enough to still their spirits, which are ready to complain,—"*why art thou cast down, oh my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*" They see enough to reconcile them to the cross they have to carry. "*If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*"

In conclusion, you remember the Apostle Peter counsels us to "*be ready always to give an answer to any man that asketh us a reason for the hope that is in us.*" Return an answer to thyself, my soul. What is thy hope of salvation? *Why* dost thou hope for heaven?

Recollect what sort of hope that is, which makes the possessor not ashamed, when Christ comes. It is the hope of a *son of God*; it is God's special gift to those who become his children by faith; it is their peculiar prerogative, one of their choice blessings,—they have a good hope. And what is it they hope for? The appearing and reign of Christ their Saviour, the display of his glory before their eyes, their own nearness to him in his kingdom, and resemblance to him. And what place has this hope in their hearts? Does it much *occupy* them, interest them, influence them? Yes. It is the most powerful influence they can be subject to; the more intensely they feel it, the stronger is their hope; and then the more easily they restrain their corruptions, the more entirely they resign themselves to God, the more thoroughly contented are they with what he assigns them here. Now see if your hope is of this kind, and has these effects; for be assured that, if you are not pursuing it, it is destroying you,—hope that does not set you forward in the way to heaven, hinders you.

In our journey through this world, there are two dark and dangerous bye-paths, of which we must beware,—the one is presumption, the other is despair. Presumption says,—and it is the vice of countless multitudes, there is no fear. Despair,—and not a few fall into it, there is no hope. Between them is the hope of the sons of God—a bright shining star, which, as we approach, becomes brighter and brighter, conducting us to a blessed immortality. Every one is invited to share in it, every one may possess it, who will be at the pains to seek it. And those who despised and neglected it—who sought not to make it their own, have no choice but to be deluded through life, and forsaken in death. God grant that both you and I, not living in presumption, we may not die in despair.

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace," if we will only take it up, "comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

St. John's, Ryde, December, 1851.

St. James', Ryde, 7th April, 1853.

SERMON V.

Matt. xiii. 30.—"Let both grow together until the harvest."

You remember what this word "both" refers to—to the wheat and the tares found springing up side by side in the same field,—the good wheat sown by the owner's hand, the tares secretly introduced of malicious design by the enemy. As the seed appears above ground, the mixed nature of the produce is discovered; but when the servants ask if they should at once root up the tares, the owner gives the unexpected answer—"*Let both grow together until the harvest.*" You know, too, the spiritual meaning of these things. Interpreted by God himself,—the field is the world—the good seed are the children of the kingdom—but the tares are the children of the wicked one—the enemy that sowed them is the devil; and while the world lasts, it is ordained by the owner, that the good and evil shall mingle. We might be ready to call in question this plan as unsuitable and ill-designed. How can God acquiesce so quietly as he seems in this wide-extended mischief,—allow tares in his own field, and give the enemy the triumph of seeing them spring and flourish, when he can root them out at once if he like? What object is answered by their continuing to disfigure and encumber it? Why should the field present such an unsightly, incongruous

mixture? Far better rid it at once, and without loss of time bring it into order. Can it be that the owner is really so indifferent to its appearance, takes so little interest in his property, as not to care how much it is over-run with weeds? Could not this enemy's machinations have been foreseen and watched against; or else, after taking advantage of the unguarded state in which the field was left (while men slept, the enemy sowed tares), why is not his work at once undone? The servants are ready to do his bidding, quite anxious to repair the mischief: "*will thou that we go and root up the tares?*" It is only the owner's decision restrains them, for they are ready to go with alacrity,—"*Let both grow together until the harvest.*" Would it be best, then, to let the servants do as they wished, and clear the field, or be more advisable, on the whole, to do as the owner directed—*Let both grow awhile?* Look into the reasons which led to this decision.

We notice, *first*, for one thing, *the wisdom of the arrangement which permits their mingling for the present.* It is no unconcern about what becomes of the fruit of the field that prompts him to give this direction. Every grain of genuine wheat is precious in his eyes. Every one of his adopted children is dear to God. Were it for their good, not a tare should be left in the field another day,—if good to be rid of the adversary, they should soon have it to themselves: and they, in their ignorance, are ready to think it really would be best if the tares were gone, and nothing but the wheat in the whole breadth of field. How desirable if this world were to lose its bad character—be rid of all that now makes it an *evil* world,—if no abominations remained to sigh and to cry over,—if it were made as much like heaven as the corruptions yet remaining in the hearts of his servants would allow,—how far pleasanter then for them to live in. How many temptations would then be got rid of—how many annoyances be freed from—griefs of heart, sufficient to cause rivers of water to flow down their eyes, escaped—how much more peace would they enjoy—and such increased scope and room for growth, if none but those who loved God and obeyed the gospel of his Son, remained.

Yet this is just the reason of the arrangement—" *Let both grow together.*"

It is because their mingled growth is of such important use, it is because it affords such invaluable discipline, such necessary training for the heirs of glory, that the tares are suffered to remain and overspread the fields in all directions, and in such quantities. For the especial good of the wheat, then, both stand till harvest;—they would forget, otherwise, where they were—think less of where they are going. This world is their battle-field, and was never meant to be their rest,—a dry wilderness, not sunny Canaan;—an enemy's country, not Immanuel's land. "*Ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you:*" and the way to it is *purposely* strewn with thorns, *intentionally* it is left a steep and fatiguing path. Rid the field of tares, and where is the trial of faith? What exercise of patience? It is the constantly seeing men of the world with their portion here, the ungodly prospering, no worldly favour shewn to those who love God, none of these gifts heaped on them,—examples such as these puts faith to the test, and proves whether it is strong enough to trust his word and wait. Clear the field of the tares, and you would settle down on earth—your language would be—here let us dwell: let us make *here* on the mount three tabernacles. What affections would there then be to set on things above, and what motives to set them there? We find it hard enough to do that with the world as it is. Notwithstanding all its evil, corruptions and disappointments,—its pains, penalties and plagues, it has mighty attractions still. With all we know of its vanities, our hearts are ever in danger of being stolen: a little prosperity will inordinately elate them. The love of this present world is a dangerous snare, and needs to be continually watched against. How would it be, if it were made a more pleasant residence for us? How it would wind about our affections! What an unconquerable hold its perishing vanities would get of our hearts, if we could mould and fashion it into such an abode of peace and godliness as we would like it to be!

Uproot the tares, and what room would there be left for forbearance and self-denial? It is easy, my brethren, to bear with the meek and humble, pleasant to oblige those who are themselves obliging,—we are travelling a smooth course when we have our own will, with few to interrupt us, and others are nearly all we could wish them to be—deferential, unselfish, thoughtful of us to our hearts content. How we should deceive ourselves if we took this as a proof that we had the graces of long-suffering, kindness, and humility! What a delusion if we supposed there was nothing, or very little, of pride, passion, irritability, or self-will in our composition, merely because the circle around us did not draw it out! You can never tell that you have a grace till it is put into exercise. You can form no judgment of what the tempers and dispositions of your heart are, till heart-trials come. The use of the tares, then, is to shew God's people what is in their hearts, just as the wilderness, with its monotony, dreariness, and comparative barrenness, shewed the Israelites, only too distinctly, what was in theirs. Wilt thou, then, that we go and root them up? No, "*Let both grow together.*" For what purpose? To humble and to prove them, let them be cast among the worldly, despite their will—among those who thwart them, speak evil of them, weary them with perverse tempers, grieve them by godless habits, test their patience, try their gentleness. This discipline will shew them to themselves, this will bring to light what manner of spirit they are of; they will learn, by painful exercise, the graces of the new creation. How else would Moses have attained such a height of meekness—Job so excelled in patience—Abraham have grown strong in faith? The only way we can discover, with certainty, if we have any of the fruit of the Spirit, is, by being thrown among things and persons that provoke our natural self-will and inexhaustible corruptions. We must not suppose the Spirit's fruit there, till we find it there, and opposition is that which must draw it out. Among the froward we learn meekness, among the self-willed, to be self-denying, among the unreasonable we learn forbearance; if the world were rid of all

such, these graces would have no play, and languish for want of exercise.

Therefore it is a very wise arrangement that decides—"Let both grow together until the harvest;"—for it strengthens and brings to maturity the new man in God's children. The tares are indispensable. The irreligious, the careless, and the wicked, little as they think it, or mean it, are thus made to serve an important purpose in the world, and are of immense use to the children of God, in keeping them from setting their hearts on the world, by their making it, in many respects, so disagreeable a residence. "*Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*" is the language of every genuine Israelite. Yet he turns the evil into a means of good. Thus he outwits his crafty enemy, and disappoints his designs. His mischief is made to serve God's purpose. "*All things work together for good to them that love God.*" "*Kept by his power, through faith unto salvation,*" that the trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Secondly. Consider the forbearance of the arrangement—"Let both grow together"—not merely for the advantage it will be to the good grain to be mixed up, for a time, with the tares—there is consideration for the tares, as well as regard for the wheat. In the heart of the compassionate owner there is a feeling of pity, even for them. Let them grow for the present: these tares, useless weeds as they are, cumbering the ground, fit only, in their present state, for the burning, may yet be made something of—it is worth while to spare them, worth while to let them remain. The comparison of things spiritual and natural fails here. You cannot in nature, by any process, convert the worthless weed into a stalk of wheat; but in the spiritual world, it is quite possible with God, and an event of every day occurrence, to turn his most active enemies into loyal subjects, and transform the most unprofitable creatures into zealous and industrious subjects. So, because such a transformation is possible, he will not have the tares destroyed. Who knows but some of these, now

too evidently tares, useless and fruitless, bringing no honour to God, and doing no service to man, may entirely change their character, and bring forth fruit unto God. At least, let time be granted to see if it may not be so. Let there not be any sudden and hasty extermination, even though at present they disfigure the field, and are only cumbering the ground. Since these children of Satan may become children of God, let them have the opportunity. While there is a prospect of their being reclaimed, and made some use of, let them grow with the wheat.

Thus God is wont to deal with the subjects of Satan's kingdom, and many such he finds within the borders of his own kingdom. Nominally his, baptized, calling themselves by his name, and believing themselves connected with his church, but in reality belonging to the prince of this world, he claims, and actually receives their allegiance. But the Lord will not be in haste to rid his kingdom upon earth of these intruders—he will tolerate them—bear long with them. They may remain in it for awhile, enjoy its ordinances and privileges, because there is some hope of their returning to him. So, too, not only within the limits of his visible, spiritual church, but throughout the whole field, which is the world. "*As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.*" "*Fury is not in me.*" This is the great general principle of his government of the world—the presence of the wheat secures protection for the tares. The field, however widely overspread, may wisely and safely be left for a season, so long as there are *some* stalks of wheat to yield a harvest; lest *they* should be confounded, and cut off in the general destruction, the time of long-suffering must be lengthened out, for it may be, some of the tares may be wrought upon, persuaded to save themselves from this untoward generation; therefore, God is in no haste to proceed to extremities,—judgment lingers,—till the harvest time fully arrives, there must be no general extermination—" *Let both grow together until the harvest.*" Such is God's purpose. This is his mind with regard to the tares that are overspread-

ing, far and wide, the field he planted with wholly good seed,—a purpose of patience, to wait and see if they would enquire after him,—to exhibit a mind relenting and forbearing,—willing to grant a season of probation, lengthened to its utmost limits, to give every opportunity of fleeing from the wrath to come, and laying hold of the hope set before them.

But on the part of the tares themselves, how differently is this arrangement viewed: the forbearance of it is overlooked and disregarded, and the construction they put upon it is every possible one but the right. By some, it is ascribed to carelessness,—“*God hath forgotten.*” Nay, it is *they* forget. God remembers. Some think it augurs that the Almighty has not so much hatred to sin as is often represented, and they think him altogether such an one as themselves; others expect to find him a faithless being, who will deny himself, and while he says one thing, means to do another, and though he threatens so terribly, never executes,—pity prevails at last. The result of it is in all cases the same, where God does not himself step in and work in their hearts. He becomes contemptible in their eyes. His letting them grow is an encouragement to continue in sin, instead of leading to repentance; because the day of grace lasts long, they think it lasts for ever. “*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*”

One more feature in the arrangement to mark is, *Thirdly. That it is a temporary one,—“till harvest.”* If it were not for this, the tares would have much the best of it. That this world is an evil world, gives them no concern; they never look at it with sorrow and heaviness, as a world lying in wickedness; its evil deeds vex not their souls; its abominations do not make them sigh; its impending ruin, they have no real belief in. They have their discomforts in it, their causes of annoyance and disquiet, but the things which make it an uncomfortable residence for the people of God, disturb them not. The dishonour done to God by sin, the misery it works every where, and Satan triumphing, is no distress to them. The world cannot

hate them, they are not afraid of its temptations, nor troubled for its sins; they have no anxiety or wish for the present state to come to an end. Let the world only smile on them, and they wish no change. With what reluctance they see the time of their departure at hand—what lingering looks thrown back at joys and pleasures past—what vain desires for a new lease of life. But it cannot be as they would have it, the world must needs grow old. The Lord's set time must come—harvest time must presently arrive—to the wheat, a long-looked-for, much expected time; as to themselves, it brings to a close all the difficulties and sufferings they had to contend with, while growing to maturity, in a bleak climate, and an ungenial soil: as to the field itself, where they were planted, it brings a complete purification to it; purged with fire, it becomes a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; their final and blessed abode, no enemy can find a way into it. Henceforth, they inherit in full, the earth which before they shared. No more a scene of guilt and woe,—nothing that defileth shall in anywise be allowed to enter: then, for those for whom the needful time of probation is passed by, when creation has ceased to groan, it will become a world where they may delight to dwell. Abraham then receives in fullest accomplishment, the promise, "*to thee, and to thy seed after thee, will I give the land wherein thou art a stranger.*" The harvest is the time of the restitution of all things, when he, whom the heavens receive for the present, comes back to put all things right.

But to the tares, what does the arrival of harvest time betoken? This temporary arrangement, by which they have standing room allowed them in the field till the grain is ripe,—what does it give place to? At that time he shall say to the reapers, "*Gather ye together first the tares.*" Gathering together is the first and preliminary step,—the angels sever the wicked from the good, and gather out from the kingdom all that offend. When the separation is effected, and the doomed ones stand by themselves, on the left hand of the throne,—not a grain of wheat is there, the whole heap is of tares; *then* a further assort-

ment takes place,—“*bind them in bundles, to burn them.*” By what rule do they conduct this process—do they bind them promiscuously, or on some sound principle of selection? May we not suppose it will be done on that of linking together the most incongruous natures—bringing in closest contact the most dissimilar and opposite characters? In these bundles, we are justified in conceiving there shall be no binding of like with like, who might feel some congeniality as victims of the same passions; but that the most uncongenial tastes and diverse propensities will be brought together and tied up in close, eternal companionship. The miser will be united with the sensualist—the spoiler and the victim—the betrayer and the betrayed—put face to face; for this is a part of the worm’s sting—one ingredient of the everlasting torment. Observe the ease with which this is assumed to be done. *Bind them in bundles*: no difficulty presents itself in collecting at once the whole mass—all who did iniquity—they are bound up unresistingly together. The great swelling words they used to vaunt, the scornful defiance they were wont to cast, all forsake them; words and messages avail nothing now. The reapers gather and tie them up like so many weeds, when the word is once given. There needs no great preparatory mustering of all the hosts of heaven, as if a mighty army of rebels were to be subdued; they are as helpless, as defenceless, as tares beneath the reaper’s sickle, they bow at once before the stroke, their heart cannot endure, nor their hands be made strong. Briars and thorns are set in vain before Jehovah, he goes through them, and burns them together. This is their sad end.

Notice the hopelessness of their case: bound together to be *burnt*—they must be made away with altogether—cast out of God’s sight entirely—neither housed, nor garnered, nor left standing in the field, but gathered, that they may be burnt—that is their end. God has no other use to put them to, they are *fit* only for destruction, and therefore God *throws* them away. These souls he has made—these sinners, whom he once called to so loudly, and besought so

lovingly, and assured so earnestly as he has, that he has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, he now *throws* away—laughs at their calamity, and mocks when their fear cometh; no entreaty, or tender reasoning from him now. They are gathered up—their struggles in the hands of those who hold them are quite fruitless. Their cries for mercy are all too late. When God spoke they would have none of his counsel, and he hath risen up to execute vengeance, the reapers have them in their grasp—“*the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up, shall they be burnt in the fire.*”

“*But gather the wheat into my barn:*” no fear of any confusion or mixture of the righteous with the wicked. Not a single stalk can be overlooked, or mistake made, by which one of the least of the pure grain should risk getting mingled with the tares, and sharing their destruction—the whole harvest is housed in perfect safety—the barn is filled. “*Many sons are brought to glory.*” “*The Redeemer sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied.*”*

Let us remember, brethren, that the field contains only wheat and tares. In the sight of God and angels, the grand distinction among the multitudes of the children of men is, that some are serving God, and some serve him not,—some are *in* Christ, and some *out* of Christ,—some are new-born of God, and some are the children of the wicked one. Some love truth and righteousness for their own sake, and hate sin because it is an infinite evil, and because God hates it—others do not love truth and righteousness except so far as they are helpful to themselves, nor do they hate sin any further than it is hurtful to themselves. This distinction, visible enough in heaven, is not so plain to *us* on earth, that *we* can draw a broad line of severance; the tares may, some of them, be of fair appearance,—yes, very fair, and make a pleasant show, but the day shall declare it. The reapers will make no

* “The names of all his saints he bears
Deep graven on his heart;
Nor shall the meanest christian say,
That he hath lost his part.”

mistake, they will distinguish infallibly between what is nature and what is grace—what is profession and what is possession—what is real life and what is only painted life. Nothing counterfeit will pass with them. My soul! hast thou well considered this? Dost thou never ask, shall I be in the barn, or in the fire? garnered, or burnt?

Were the reapers now to come in, to whom would they advance? On which of our foreheads would they see the damning mark of a heart not given to God? a soul not in Christ? How many of *us* here, were this the harvest, would be bound for the burning? We would all fain flatter ourselves that we are not the persons. We can sit at ease and hear these things, promising ourselves that we shall escape; but could we venture to foretel that *no* bitter and lamentable cry would be lifted up as those stern messengers came forth? Would they find only wheat here, and from all voices would they hear the unanimous shout, "*Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him?*" Would there be no tares? How melancholy to think, if only *one* would wail instead of sing! how intensely should we compassionate our unhappy fellow-sinner, taken away to be burnt, while we were gathered for the garner. We should mourn over his evil case, shudder at his melancholy fate. Would it be a solitary one? Alas! What if many—very many here are at last cast away! Search, brethren, and see. "*Examine your own selves.*" "*Prove your own selves.*" The Lord is a God of judgment. He knows what we are, each of us. Cry mightily, unceasingly, "*Search me O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*"

SERMON VI.

1 Cor. i. 23, 24. —“ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

IN the last year's Church Missionary Report, is the following account of a conversation between a Missionary and a Hindoo:—I was requested (says the Missionary) by a man to deliver a message to the Home Committee, which was as follows,—You have now, said he, preached the gospel many years, spent thousands of rupees in Tracts, Schools, and teaching, and little is the effect your labours and profusion of money have produced. For what are those few hundred converts you have in your several missions, in comparison with the mass of people, and why is this? I will tell you. Your system of carrying on your work is faulty; unless you pursue a new course, and adopt a new plan, you will never succeed. That radical change in your plan must begin at home. You came out on a wrong principle. You preach well,—all you say about God, his goodness, love, and care, his holiness and mercy, is excellent,—the morals you preach are beautiful,—all you say about the resurrection, and heaven, and life to come, is cheering. But when you thus preach, and have all the hearts of the people with you, you spoil the thing again by a foolish part of your preaching, which is the Cross of Christ. Leave that out—refrain from telling the people that Jesus Christ was crucified for them—for that is an offence to us all. Why call Jesus Christ by this name? Why not call him God, Lord, Saviour? But cease to preach Christ crucified,—tell your friends at home to give special instruction that this doctrine be no longer preached, and numbers will embrace christianity.

Well, said the Missionary, this is nothing new you tell us; eighteen hundred years ago, people, like yourself, told Paul and the other Apostles the same things. The

Cross of Christ, some said, was "foolishness," others, an "offence," yet this very foolishness has achieved the greatest revolution in the world. By its power, our forefathers were converted, and it is this very doctrine which will overturn all the idols of Hindoostan. If you wish to see India converted, the man replied, follow my advice—if you desire to labour in vain, follow your own foolish head. The objections started in wealthy, intellectual Corinth, to the doctrine of salvation which the Apostle preached there, have not, we see, grown obsolete, and out of date. It was no peculiarity in the Corinthian mind to see something singular, contemptible, and foolish, in the doctrine of the cross. It was not that in *itself*, nor his manner of presenting it, there was something that made it offensive to them in *particular*. It was the same thing everywhere. It has been the same thing *always*; the aspect the cross had to that age and generation, was its natural, invariable aspect to the world. It gives the same impression. The same ideas are associated with it. The Apostle, however, is not daunted or discouraged by the reception the world gives to his doctrine. He is not ashamed of it, for all that; he continues, determined to know nothing but Christ crucified, That is still the centre doctrine of his system, because, however Jew and Gentile may regard it, he knows the doctrine may wear another aspect, by which the character is wholly changed,—the same object, he says, "*Christ crucified*," is to one man, foolishness, to another, wisdom. There is a diversity of opinions in the world about it; some despise what others esteem; this explains the reason of the difference, and declares the preparation necessary for a true understanding of the cross.

In the first place, then, he describes the aspect which Christ crucified wears to the world. Christ *crucified*, he is careful to insist on, because that implies salvation comes through the cross, because the character of a Saviour was acquired by crucifixion.

To the Jews it was a stumbling block, a great offence to be told of their mistake, blindness, horrible crime. They were aware that if this be true, that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had put to death as an impostor,

was God's son—their promised king, then their crime was of the deepest dye. To the Gentiles, it was foolishness to maintain that life was looked for through another's death, that anything valuable and beneficial could be expected from one whom his own people had crucified, that the blood of a man who died as a malefactor could be the real elixir of life.

Let us see how such an idea of Christ crucified is accounted for; what is it gives salvation by the cross this aspect of folly? You have heard of natural religion. There are ideas about God—his nature and attributes, and our duty to him, still left in us. We have a conscience acting in accordance with those ideas, excusing, or rebuking us, according to the degree of its light. But there is no place for a Mediator, a Saviour, in natural religion. Its system is complete without one. The idea of such an office does not commend itself as exactly meeting our greatest want. We can understand readily enough, as that Hindoo did, that it is proper to love and honour God. It is nothing strange and offensive to the natural man to teach that his Creator is to be feared and trusted; but put the Gospel before him, and he calls it "foolishness," because there is nothing in himself inclining him to accept it. It is a way of dealing with him that he never dreamt of—a way to which he at once takes a prejudice. It makes far too much of sin. It is no such difficult matter to convince me that I, as a sinner, incurred my Creator's displeasure, that I am liable to punishment at his hands. Conscience has told me that already. But the difficulty is to make me believe that *sin* is so vast, so infinite an evil; that the remedy is not in our own hands, that I must submit to divine and sovereign disposal, that I am unable to restore myself, and that the way of restoration is through the cross. For though I *am* a transgressor, why cannot I make amends? why should not my repentance be accepted? Let him only tell me to do some great thing, and I feel no doubt of being capable of it. Will he not be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? I acknowledge my offence, but I can expiate it,—I have sinned, but will make abundant recompense.

This is in reality the language of man; but the gospel comes and declares the vanity and emptiness of all these resources. It shuts me up under sin, condemned, and without excuse; *eternal* sufferings are the due penalty; and the only equivalent to be found is in the sufferings of the Son of God, made man. But how low does this revelation lay me, how ruined and helpless it represents me. What must be the greatness of my sin, when God absolutely refuses to treat with me as a principal, will hold no communion, except through the medium of his Son! The spirit of man strives against such an impossibility, its haughtiness cannot brook being so accounted of, to be thus estimated, as utterly undone, able to do nothing towards a recovery. To be thus prescribed and dictated to, to receive pardon and life at the hands of Jesus, and him crucified, and surrender soul and body to him in return. Great power must be put forth to reconcile us to such a way of being saved. Our own way seems rational and feasible enough—God's is an offence and a folly. There is no disposition in us to accept it, but rather the strongest aversion possible, little as we may be sensible of it. Else, why the impossibility of a sinner coming to Christ without the Father's drawing him? "*No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.*"—*John vi. 44.* Why must his power be put forth to draw me to the feet of one who has nothing but the best blessings for my acceptance, except that neither my own hopes nor fears are strong enough either to draw or drive me thither. What does the Apostle mean in writing to the Ephesians, by the "*exceeding greatness of his power to them that believe?*" Doubtless, that the gospel, as presented to mankind, is calculated to be such an offence to our natural pride and self-love, and wears such an aspect of foolishness, that by another's death on the cross, not by our own repentance and good works, we are reconciled to God,—that nothing but the power of God, and that power in its exceeding greatness, can rectify our ideas, disarm our prejudices, overcome our reluctance.

Let us go on to observe, *Secondly*, the other aspect,

Christ crucified, presents. The same object, so unworthy, so repulsive in the eyes of the world, has a very different appearance to those placed in a position to see it aright—Christ crucified the *power of God*. To the Jews, his crucifixion was a sign of *want of power*,—“*He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*” Had he come down, as they tauntingly bade him, farewell to the hope of salvation for the world. He might have come down and confounded his enemies by such a display of power, but that was not the needed manifestation of the power of God. While to human eyes he is stretched a helpless victim on the cross, he is laying the foundation of his kingdom, and securing his future triumphs. Little they knew that it was for the saving of others, he saved not himself; by enduring the cross, he proved himself mighty to save. It showed he could bear the whole weight of a curse that would have crushed the world, that he was able to intercept it from us, and though it bruised, and wounded, and put him to grief, and brought him to the gates of death, he was able to redeem us from it—strong enough to tread the wine-press alone. The victory remained with him.

The cross thus becomes the most powerful instrument for turning our hearts to God and to him. What a power must reside in it, what an attractive influence it must possess, and be capable of putting forth, when the Lord can say, “*I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me:*” i.e. there shall be enough in the fact of his crucifixion to draw them, not Jews only, but likewise Gentiles, all mankind,—his cross is capable of doing so. There must, therefore, be something in it far more effective and powerful to convert our hearts, than any array of holy examples or excellent lessons. We are sensible of the force of a fine example, we see its loveliness—wish and strive to imitate it. We can be impressed by the instructions of wisdom, but the power of converting a soul, “*bringing it out of darkness into light,*” changing its principles, arming it with strength, maintaining it in the way of God—lies not in them—is far beyond their reach.

Else, the example and the instructions of Jesus had been enough, not indeed to atone for our guilt, but at least to win our hearts, to slay their enmity, and reconcile us to God. But it is not so;—it is the sight of him crucified that must do this.—“*I, if I be lifted up,*” not merely if I teach, if I speak my words of life, but “*if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.*” That spectacle shall stir the depths of their souls, and be able to transform their whole being. Accordingly, it was not long before the power of the cross was put to the test. That same Jesus, said Peter to the Jews (with no enticing words, but in a simple statement of facts, and a clear display of proofs), whom ye crucified, hath God made Lord and Christ. Then the truth about him, for the first time, flashes into their eyes. When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, and cried out, three thousand of them—“*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” Christ crucified, becomes manifestly the “*power of God.*” What amazement so irresistible as this! What other representation would so profoundly have affected them. God had then subjected Jesus of Nazareth to that shameful death at their hands, for their salvation. It was *their* sins he bore in dying. He was contented to suffer so much for them. To Christ crucified they bow in obedience, and surrender themselves to him who bought them.

So, too, in every case of conversion, whether Jew or Gentile, that which breaks the heart, and makes the spirit yield itself to God, is the sight of the cross. When Christ crucified rises into view as he is—the enmity is gone. When his enemies see how they pierced him, they mourn. Though it is not the mere spectacle of Christ crucified, to this end set forth, that will produce these effects, He is the “*power of God,*” the means that the Spirit of God will use. The cross of Christ has no natural attractions for our eyes. We would look at it afar off with unmoved hearts, with no inclination to mourn for the wounds and the sufferings of the victim, but I will pour, saith God, my spirit upon them, and they shall look and mourn.

Christ the Wisdom of God. The cross is the fittest

means devised for promoting God's design of glorifying himself in our salvation, the fittest, wisest method of winning our souls, and magnifying his perfections. The cross is the wise and wondrous contrivance by which it becomes evident that the great mystery can be solved, the great difficulty cleared up. God can be just, do himself justice, maintain the sacred dignity of his government, and yet can justify offenders. There was in God a yearning desire to show us mercy, an intense unwillingness to let us perish. But how could the stream of mercy flow out to us? The curse of the law stops it, the sinning soul must die. The honor of his law is not to be made of no account. When sin and death are inseparably connected, how little would it become the Ruler of the world to sever them, to reverse his original decision, and to proclaim that he does not mean to abide by it. It was therefore for his wisdom to discover the way by which mercy might reach us, while his own honour is vindicated, and his glory promoted. He, for whom are all things, and *by* whom are all things, saw that it became him to bring home his banished, and make sons of those who hated him, by the blood of the cross. The voluntary offering of the Son of God to be Prince, or superintendent of the great business of salvation,—“*Lo I come,*” sets free the love of God, takes off the restraint, and makes way for mutual reconciliation. Therefore, saith he, doth my Father love me, because I gave my life; and the Father *so* loved the world, yearned over it with such inexpressible affection, which yet cannot have free course till justice is satisfied, that when the Son offers himself to endure the cross, it endears him to the Father, because it gives his love a channel: “*therefore doth my Father love me, because I gave my life for the world.*”

How much, then, must he love the world! How wise, and well established must be the plan which provides it with salvation. The cross is the grand manifestation of it. Christ crucified is pre-eminently, and above all other works, a manifestation of the wisdom of God. His sacrifice equals and compensates for all the wrong done to God. He declares

God's greatness, not in the punishment of sins, but in their remission. The cross delivers us from the curse of the law, and yet it magnifies the law, and satisfies its every claim. Mercy and truth meet, and are received there. In Christ crucified there is the combination of man that can die as a propitiation, and God that can overcome death and bring life and immortality to light. In him is seen man who can suffer, and God who gives unspeakable value to what is suffered. This is the mysterious wisdom of the cross—Christ crucified is the ordinance that brings us to God.

For thus, *in the third place*, the Apostle accounts for the different views taken of the cross. Why should the same object wear such totally different aspects? How is it one man considers foolishness that in which another discovers the power and wisdom of God? The Apostle explains it by saying to them that are called, that this is the preparation necessary for understanding. He points out to the Corinthians what they are indebted to for their knowledge of the mystery of Christ, no superior understanding, or mental acumen, for ye see your calling, and it was God commanded the light to shine into your hearts. In full confidence, therefore, that his gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, and that God, according to an eternal purpose, will effectually *call* some to faith in Christ—Paul will deliver the message entrusted—let Jew or Greek treat it as they may. We preach Christ crucified—the reception this doctrine may have is not his affair. The wisdom and expediency of making it the staple and substance of his embassy to man, he is not consulted about. It is put into his hands to publish through the world. Reconciliation with God, peace of conscience, and holiness of life, are to spring out of it; and though the preaching may seem only likely to confirm the prejudices, and strengthen the opposition of the Jew, only fitted to excite contempt in the mind of the polished and supercilious Greek, he is determined to know nothing else, *because*, to us that are *called*, it is "*the power of God.*" The natural man, he knows, cannot receive or discern it. He lacks the capacity.

It is *spiritually* discerned. Human sagacity is at fault to discover any marvellous power or profound wisdom in the cross: but through the effectual calling of God, these things, though hid, are revealed,—he will give to those who heartily seek it, an understanding to know him here.

Hereby, then, brethren, let us each make *our* calling sure. What think ye of Christ? is the test and proof. What power and wisdom do you see—have you felt, in him crucified? Have you seen as much *wisdom* in the cross as the means of reconciliation, and through it established a fellowship with God? Do you see what a satisfying foundation it is for hope, relief from fears? Have you found in Christ crucified an answer to the accusations of the law, a source of peace in your conscience, a ground of confidence in coming before God? "*Who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died.*" Consider again, what influence has the cross exerted on you? Is it powerful enough to make you cast away a bosom sin, to gain your affections for him who died on it—to secure him your heart and services, to *kill* love of the world, to produce an earnest, devoted attachment? All these effects it is *calculated* to have, all these it *ought* to have, all these it *has*, on those called of God. And why on them *only*? Whence the necessity of the calling to produce them? Because the mere knowledge of Christ having been crucified, knowing about him, the intellectual acquaintance and conviction, has no influence on our hearts and lives. It is having the savour of knowledge,—the spiritual judgment and feeling, (Phil. i. 9)—knowing him by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, receiving the spirit of wisdom and revelation. The mere knowledge we can acquire for ourselves; the *savour* must be God's gift. Let us put ourselves under the beams of heavenly light, as it is reflected from the cross, and cry to him for the sight of Christ in his full orb'd glory.

Ryde, March, 1853.

SERMON VII.

Philippians i. 6.—“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

You notice particularly in these words the sanguine persuasion which the Apostle expressed—“*He is confident of this very thing,*” and he does not hesitate to say so. It is not in a private communication to another church that he thus recalls the thoughts and impressions he has about the Philippians; it is his assured language to themselves; language that has no ambiguity about it; that no one hardly can mistake or misinterpret. Moreover, he is not a man likely to be carried away by enthusiastic feelings; and in his joy at witnessing the steady progress of his converts, apt to conclude too hastily that no obstacles would ever arise, and no checks would ever interpose. Far from it. Still he seems to have no fear of disappointment in the end; he is quite persuaded that a good work, beyond all question, has been begun, and he takes upon him to answer for it, that it will be finished.

Let me endeavour to answer a question which naturally suggests itself. What warrant has the Apostle for this confidence? Other converts had disappointed him. He cannot conceal his chagrin when speaking to the Galatians,—he wonders who had bewitched them, that they should not obey the truth. Demas, he once regarded as a brother and fellow-helper,—he forsakes him! Will not these and other examples teach him caution, and make him slow to pronounce a decided opinion? Is not this a somewhat hasty and premature judgment of his converts at Philippi? Let us see what will justify such language. How is he warranted in saying, not merely that he hopes the good work begun will be performed, but that he is confident it will, he knows it will.

Consider the motive God had for beginning this good work in them. Who are the subjects of it? Who are those Philippians, that they should be turned

from darkness into marvellous light; that they should have their sins forgiven, and the law of God written in their hearts. What was it that made them to be received as fit subjects? In what were they distinguished from their fellow-creatures that could lead them to be selected for so excellent a benefit? In nothing! In this case and sense, God is no respecter of persons. Those, in whom he begins a good work, whoever they may be, are originally, in every case, blind and stubborn sinners; full of enmity to their Maker—wishing he would depart from them; and, as far as they can achieve it, living without him in the world. Such, he finds all, whatever quarter he looks to. Any, of a different character, who may be fit subjects for the exercise of his gracious purposes, he cannot discover. “*The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one!*” And then, further, when it is with such materials as these, he must work,—desperately wicked hearts, and alienated minds; when it is the captives of Satan, and servants of sin, that must be fashioned into vessels fit for his use; when he comes down into the midst of any of these, full of love and goodwill,—he finds, at Philippi, as well as elsewhere, a spirit of obstinate resistance, and utter aversion on their part, to be blessed as he would bless them.

Brethren, those of you who are converted, when you were so, you were conquered. You contended against God every step of the way; as long as you could, you stood out, and resisted, till fairly overpowered by the gracious workings of the Holy Spirit. He had to strive mightily with you; he was obliged to persuade, to threaten, to beseech you. You would never have listened, if he had not spoken at length so loudly, that you could not choose, but hear. You would never have enquired for God, and a Saviour, if he had not first sought you out, and drawn nigh to you. You could have been well content to do without him, so long as he would leave you to yourselves.

Then, if it is such characters as these He takes in hand, by what motive can He be influenced? They are in themselves his enemies, odious by wicked works, and he could sweep them easily away, and fill up their places with more tractable creatures. What motive, but simply his *good pleasure*,—*his love*, could lead to his beginning a work of renewal there? The Philippians were not favoured with this distinction because of any superior worth and importance in them; nor was it from any feelings of unusual pity that their case specially called for, nor from any difference between them and any other men. No. God hews indiscriminately from the same rock. When he would form a new creature, he searches not for the most promising specimens. To us, it may appear much more feasible to win yonder apparently blameless, outwardly exemplary, and gentle character, to the love of Christ; to make that man of honour in the world a man of God; than to transform yonder unknown, unnoticed, reckless, sin-hardened being into a child of light. Before God, the materials are all equally unpromising in themselves, alike alienated in heart, and offering the same resistance to the workings of his Spirit.

Therefore, if in such circumstances God should anywhere begin a good work, that would give the strongest assurance that it will be continued. For, suppose, on the other hand, it is for some worth he discovers in me (were that possible), because he perceives a promising disposition,—a heart not so entirely indisposed as that of some, to receive and listen, that therefore he begins the good work. Would not then your confidence be checked by the reflection, he may not answer the expectation formed; would you not feel that the carrying out the Divine purpose must depend on my not thwarting it by any perverse behaviour; you can by no means be so sure that I shall not change, as to venture to express more than a hope that what has been begun may be finished. Or, suppose again, that it is simply pity, that brings deliverance, and raises me up from death, and begins to have compassion on me while lying in darkness, and unwilling to come out of it. Still, you dare not

be confident that this work of mercy would be perfected; for you might fear, lest I should, by waywardness and disobedience, sometime or other, so weary out the patience and long-suffering of God, as to make him shut up his compassions from me. But, when it is neither for any special worth that he sees in a sinner, nor merely for pity's sake, that he begins the good work;—when his own goodness, his love, is the only moving cause, there can be no doubt *then*, that what is begun, if it can only be ascertained, once for all, that there has actually been a beginning, the perfecting must needs follow. If God will once take in hand those who were his enemies, and subdue them, bring down in their souls the power of sin, and set up his own image there, never can there be a question whether he will finish the work. “*If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*”—Rom. v. 10. It is not as though he were ignorant of the stubborn nature on which he works; as though he had not calculated on resistance, and was taken by surprise when his offers of mercy were flung back, and his love despised; or, as if he had not reckoned on finding them frail and helpless. If God once breaks up the hard ground and sows the good seed, he will watch over it, and rear it to maturity. If he lays the foundation, without doubt, he means to erect a building upon it.

One attribute in God, which they that know his name put great trust in, is—his *Unchangeableness*—it is connected with all his attributes, it binds them altogether—it belongs to his character as a whole—it is part of his name and nature. He is unchangeable in his goodness, and in the gifts and callings it prompts him to bestow. In reference to threatened judgments, his unchangeableness forbids us to rely on any relenting fondness, or to fancy that he is not inflexible in purpose; and just the same is he in his dealings of kindness with sinners,—they are not the precarious indulgences of mere pity; sincere, perhaps, at the time, but not removing the shrinking sense of insecurity; no; they, too, are unchangeable. “*I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. His seed will I make to endure for*

ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenants will I not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips."

Look at the grand manifestation of this unchangeableness in the cross. Who is there? *Mine elect, he in whom my soul delighteth*, finishing the work which was given him to do. He is the substitute there, in person, for all who believe. God cannot keep from them the blessing of peace and pardon, without denying his own nature; those in Christ, in whom the work is begun by their coming to him, he cannot but accept, and keep by his power. St. Paul might say he was confident, from what he saw was already performed. His confidence arose not from what he saw in the Philippians, but from what he knew to be *in God*. Looking at them merely, he saw just what he saw at Ephesus,—men dead in trespasses and sins; no sort of recommendation about them to the Divine favour; but turning from them to God for an explanation, he saw that it was because he was rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved them in Christ Jesus. That, he saw, was the origin of the life of God in their souls.

But may not love change? Its object may prove worthless; these Philippians, promising as they now are, may turn round, and fall away; this goodness may be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew. Will not love then be quenched, and will not wrath then arise? How can he be confident? Nay, but it is a love unchangeable we speak of—one strong as death—"many waters cannot quench such love, neither can the floods drown it." "*Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*"—*John xiii. 1.* Doth not God know well, whom he thus loves? Their utter unloveliness, their selfish tempers, beyond conception selfish, their intensely evil hearts of unbelief and wickedness. Ah, he knows it all. It can

then be no capricious fondness, that hath made him take them up, so that, should they disappoint him, he may soon cast them down again. He drew them to himself as sinners, he justified them as ungodly, he put his Spirit into them; though their carnal hearts were at enmity with him, he forgave them, because Christ had made a perfect atonement. These blessings, once given, are irrevocable gifts, without repentance on God's part. It may, indeed, be doubtful who *has* them—Alas! what a doubt frequently hangs over this point; but there is no doubt whatever, that when they are bestowed, they never will be recalled; for, by two immutable things, his name and nature—his promise and oath, in which it was impossible for God to lie, he hath shown that he is unchanging in counsel, that all might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them.

This may suffice as an answer to the first question, what warrant had the Apostle for speaking thus confidently? He had the sufficient warrant of God's *unchanging goodness*,—the only possible motive to which he could ascribe any good work being begun at all; for they were, in themselves, so worthless and undeserving, that they might have been justly treated as condemned sinners, in a very different way. He might, then, be well assured that, if Divine goodness stooped to rescue such, he would suffer none to pluck them out of his hand. "*I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.*"—John x. 28.

But another question suggests itself:—grant it, that the Apostle was quite justified in speaking confidently as he did;—that it was no hasty and unwarrantable conclusion to which he had come; still, it might be asked, was it well to tell them so? Was it not rash to speak so positively to them, however certain he might feel in his own mind upon the matter? Had he not best have kept his confidence to himself, for may they not conclude now there is no fear of falling; there is no difficulty left; there is no doubt of our going on to perfection? And will not this strong expression of confidence, from so great a master as Paul, tend to foster security and carelessness; nay, does he

not hereby do somewhat to check and prevent the very thing he so ardently longs for?

See, in the *first* place, that whatever dangerous consequences you might apprehend from his words, they are at least qualified by warnings and exhortations of a very strong and emphatic character; and by cautions, not a few, as to the perils in the path. I need not recount these. You can read them all in the Epistle to the Philippians. Certainly, he puts no slight or discouragement on their own efforts, when he bids them work out their "*own salvation with fear and trembling.*" He sanctions no listless waiting, when he rouses them to be like-minded with Christ, having the same love; when he urges them to press forward, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, "*toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,*" and when he calls on them to be "*blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke.*"

Besides, in justification of what he says in the text, we must recollect, he had not only to press upon the Philippians to work out their salvation, but to keep strongly in their view God's plan and method in saving a soul; that he takes the lead in every case—that he assumes the management of the whole matter—that he says, "*Rise up and walk,*"—my business is to follow his leading. The co-operation betwixt God and me, is not that I, for my part, do my best, resolve, and carry out as well as I can; and he, for his, lends me his help when I need it—has a tender consideration for my weakness, and seconds my honest endeavours. It is altogether of a different nature. I work out my salvation, not as by myself—looking up for help *outside* of me—but following out what God *within* me has begun to do. I rely on him to work in me, both to will and to do; and thus, while working myself, I am *worked* on by God. It is I, co-operation with him, not he with me. He takes the initiative, begins a good work, and then the soul forthwith works out his will.

Secondly. God does not pluck out a brand from the burning, to throw it back again. He does not create his own image in a soul, to let it be defaced. Wherever he begins a good work in any, and proceeds to

justify, he is sure to go on to sanctify, and to glorify. One of the best proofs we can have of this, is, progressive godliness: one of the surest characters of true grace, is, its strengthening and nourishing quality. We can ascertain the reality of the work, the genuineness of our christianity, only by its advance in our souls—by our having more sanctification, more power over ourselves, more deep sense of our sinfulness, more resignation and devotion to God. Where God gives his Spirit to work holiness, he means to give eternal life; the spirit of his grace is the earnest of that inheritance; the pledge that it shall be enjoyed. "*In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.*"—Ephes. i. 13, 14. And so the Apostle, believing that he saw the Spirit's work in the Philippians,—ascribing their christianity to saving grace, tells them he is sure. Notwithstanding that many may fall away presently, and dishonour their profession, and grow cold in Christ's service, still, it is not the less true, that every good work begun by God, shall be finished. If otherwise, it will, then, only be too plain, that what *looked* like God's work in them, was but a counterfeit resemblance of it.

Thirdly. Was it wise and right in the Apostle to tell the Philippians that he was so sure? He would not so strongly have expressed his confidence, surely, if he considered hurtful results might follow. He would never have held out such a prospect, if he felt it might have made them presumptuous, and engendered a careless antinomian spirit.

He knew, on the contrary, how well fitted it was to cheer their hearts; what encouragement to perseverance, lay in the assurance that God was watching over the seed he had sown; and was working in them, to bring it to perfection. He said it, to *promote* their progress, never supposing that it would *check* it: to stimulate their diligence, not reckoning that it would make them slacken it. For, we know what a stimulus is the assurance of success; we know that the way to quicken energy and perseverance, is to give it encouragement. Had he given them the impression that their confidence must be in their own resolutions and

principles, he would have cherished an independent spirit, that would have estranged them from God, and have led to apostacy. Had he dwelt in terror of their presumption, exclusively on the trials of their position and circumstances, he might have made their hearts faint within them, as so many chances of failure presented themselves; while these existed, which have such a tendency to lower hope, there is need of some encouragement to raise the spirit; there is no real fear of his warnings being neutralized, while he exhibits the bright side of the prospect.

It is not his meaning that they could not turn aside, if *they would*, as if they were placed already on a point of safety, where their feet could never slide, and off which they could never fall. He teaches them that the employment of means (working out their salvation) is quite compatible with the certainty of the event. He reckons on confidence of success not diminishing their exertions. Was that an unwarrantable reckoning, or a just one? Let us answer from our own experience. I can understand a person, who knows nothing of the matter, considering it an unwise and rash revelation for the Apostle to make to the Philippians, and calculated to puff them up, and create a false security; but I am sure that any one engaged in working out their salvation, works more cheerfully and hopefully, in the knowledge that God will never forsake the work of his own hands; that Divine power has undertaken the difficult work, and engaged to keep what is committed to him. It is enough to prevent such an one from being high-minded, and to make him fear, to know how many lived apparently,—mark, apparently, in the fellowship and favour of God, for a season, and afterwards turned to folly; it is enough to make him jealous over self, and alive to the mighty dangers that beset him, to remember the bond there is between life and righteousness,—death and sin. Still, he may take courage, if the work is begun, that God will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ; and in the humble confidence that it is begun in him, he may go on his way rejoicing.

St. James's, Ryde, Nov. 1852.

SERMON VIII.

Ezekiel ix. 4.—“And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.”

THIS remarkable proceeding is explained by a previous chapter, the 8th, which describes the carrying of the Prophet in vision, from Babylon to Jerusalem, to witness there the abominations practised by the Jews, even in the most holy place. The vision extends from the 8th chapter, to the end of the 11th, and is intended as an answer to the Elders of the Jews, then in captivity, enquiring of the Prophet, if there was any word from the Lord, which would throw some light on their prospects and destiny.

After the apostate state of the people has been portrayed, by a succession of examples, to justify the Lord's wrath and purposes of vengeance against them, the course he means to pursue, of punishment to be inflicted, is shown; for, as to exercising any further forbearance, and looking on patiently any longer, while these abominations are committed, it would serve no object, and make no impression. Jehovah is therefore about to *wind* up with a work of instant and summary judgment; as though impatient to make an end, and not willing to restrain further his just indignation at the insults heaped upon him, he summons with loud voice, those that have charge over the city, to draw near, each with his destroying weapon in his hand. On which summons six men appear, equipped and ready for their work, while among them is seen one whose garb seems to bespeak a different errand for him. Instead of a sword for slaughter at his side, there is a writer's ink-horn, and he is clothed in linen, the clothing of the High Priest, whose peculiar office and prerogative it was to make intercession, and plead for mercy. His presence, however, on the occasion, is no pledge of the Lord's relenting. His office is not to stay the aveng-

ing arm, and just as the blow is falling, to avert it, and deliver the culprits; he has a special charge committed to him; the seeking out all in Jerusalem who sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in it; and the marking such on their foreheads. And while the others follow his steps, under orders to slay with unsparing eye, and un pitying hand, old and young, maids, little children, and women; strict charge is given to touch none whom the man in linen has set aside. "*Come not near any man upon whom is the mark.*" To those favoured persons let me now invite your attention. Let us make enquiry into these two particulars about them;—

First. The import of the mark upon their foreheads.

Second. The character of the persons distinguished by it.

In the *first* place, as to the means and object of the mark affixed to certain in Jerusalem, for one thing, it puts a distinction between the inhabitants separated. There were two distinct bands. It distinguished friends from foes. You saw, indeed, no visible, outward token implicated on their foreheads; no actual, indelible mark, bearing the very impress of God. They wore no external badge, in proof of being unher the protection of heaven. Yet was there that in them, which, in characters sufficiently plain, bespoke them God's servants, and witnessed to what they were. There was that which manifestly declared them epistles, legible and distinct enough to be known. The mark was made, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; imprinted, not on the forehead, but on the heart. These, to the eyes of heaven, and its messengers, was palpable enough. Christ knows his own property well, and can tell where each of his jewels lies, however miscellaneously mixed up, for the present, with the property of the god of this world. He does not aim at keeping them while here, in a cabinet by themselves; he is willing to let both wheat and tares grow together. He has prepared no Goshen for the reception of his people, as one after another they are drawn out from a world "*lying in wickedness.*" It is not his wish they should live thus apart by themselves

in some nook or corner, partitioned off the world, where they shall be kept in safety and seclusion, far from the sight and sound of evil. Such a separation as this, such actual bodily withdrawment, he has never contemplated for them. Rather let them be cast, as it were, at random, into the midst of the dominion of the prince of darkness, and scattered about here and there in little companies, than be collected and set apart by themselves. For while "*Kept, by the power of God unto salvation,*" and marked, in token of distinction from those remaining as enemies, there needs not any place of shelter or concealment fenced for them, till that salvation is ready to be revealed. The world wants them. They are the "*salt of the earth.*" They must be spread over its kingdom, pervade all its corners, or it will sink into decay and corruption.

Thus scattered and mingled with the ungodly, and often hidden, *He*, at least, is at no loss where to find them. The mark makes them distinguishable everywhere. Desponding Elijah may look around, in vain, for a sympathizing face, and sorrowfully urge that, "*he only is left;*" but the Lord knows better,—that even in such a dark and evil day, there are seven thousand of his jewels. Therefore, they may safely lie about the world, scattered to and fro, mixed up with, and almost hidden by the chaff and stubble; in the day that he gathers them, not one shall be found missing.

Observe, also, the mark on the foreheads of the men at Jerusalem was God's secret sign of approval of them. His own stamp of approbation. Let Jerusalem be as defiled as it may, the earth condemned before God, there is even a remnant to find grace,—a few not defiled,—very precious, as the bearing and manifesting to the world of some traces of his image. His legible epistles to it, even though the writing be somewhat defaced and blotted. Specimens, however rare, and not without alloy, yet still specimens of what redeemed man should be; sparkling out here and there, from amid the dull, dark mass; all the brighter from the contrast they present to it; even though the borrowed light in which they shine is so much dimmed by their own native blackness.

And we notice, *secondly*, it is a mark of *safety*, as well as distinction. It secured those who bore it, from the devouring sword, unsheathed against the city. Jerusalem was hopelessly doomed. The judgment is passed, the executors of the sentence are in the midst. Destruction is ready to begin at the sanctuary. But the shadow of the Almighty goes before the ministers of his vengeance, and in the general and indiscriminate slaughter, these favoured ones are encompassed with a shield; they are remembered in that hour, and given in special charge. "*Come not near any man upon whom is the mark.*" So, whenever God has risen up in judgment, he has bethought himself of the handful. Any *He* has in the place are marked out to be spared. Sodom contained but *one* righteous man, but he was not overlooked; the mark was on him, and he must not be lost. "*Haste thee, escape to the mountain, for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither.*" The four Angels who stand at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds, cannot begin their work, till the preliminary precaution is taken. "*Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads.*"

If we ask now, what is the nature of this mark, which secures so effectually the approved ones? Look at the door-posts of Goshen. It is a mark of blood. And wherever the destroying angel sees it, he passes by. But neither at Jerusalem, nor now in the earth at large, is it a mark affixed to a whole favored nation. The blood of the slain lamb could avail none but the Israelites. Egypt had no share,—was not invited to partake. It had no opportunity of learning what was the magic talisman that would be a surer defence on their houses than bars and bolts. They could get no access to the blood that sprinkled upon the door-posts, would ward off the blow. But the blood of Christ, *our* Passover, is available for all the world. While every one must now see to it for himself, that it sprinkles his conscience, and cleanses him from sin,—each of us must look to our own safety, and make our own application. But when the mark of cleansing and consecrating blood is seen, it claims for that soul the protection of heaven. Christ will undertake that

nothing shall touch and harm it. "*Who is he that condemneth?*" when "*it is Christ that died.*" "*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*" when "*it is God that justifieth.*"

At the same time, it does not imply that those marked ones, so hidden in secret chambers, so sheltered under their Redeemer's wing, shall not feel the storm raging, and making such havoc around them. The marked men at Jerusalem, while jealously preserved from the ruin that fell upon all the rest, were not entirely exempted from trouble. It could hardly be so. When judgment falls on the ungodly, the righteous must be, to some extent, involved. When Jerusalem was afterwards sacked and destroyed, because its people rejected the Gospel, of which they were privileged to have the first hearing, how greatly did the christians suffer in the general distress. The "*days of that tribulation were shortened for their sakes,*" but they tasted deeply its bitterness. The bolt directed against the guilty, cannot altogether avoid touching the guiltless. They are so close by, so intermingled, connected by such a variety of ties, that their entire escape from the judgment their sins have not shared in bringing down, is impossible. Only they have the consolation that, "*all things shall work together for their good.*" They know enough of *Him* in whom they have believed, not to count it "*strange concerning the fiery trial that shall try them.*" They are aware that in the course of Providence, it could hardly be otherwise. But the affliction is only for a little moment. The storm which has swept off the ungodly, and left not a trace behind, passes over their heads. There is no perpetual injury. When it is gone, the sky is bright and unclouded. Sorrow has fled away. Such is the Lord's care for his servants in a day of judgment and woe. A mark is imprinted on their foreheads. A mark of distinction as his friends; a mark of precaution, to secure them from the destroying sword.

Secondly. Our second enquiry is, the character of the persons to whom the mark is affixed. Who, and of what sort are those upon whom is the mark? A character is given, by which they are easily found and known. "*Men that sigh, and that cry, for all the*

abominations that be done in the midst thereof." These are the persons to be searched for. There are two peculiar features in them, which their description points at.

First. It shows they are men of pure heart,—"*they sigh.*" This is a quality of which God makes great account,—sets large store by. It is a redeeming quality in his estimation. Lot did wrong in selecting Sodom; but the vexation its ungodly deeds caused his soul,—the bitter loathing he never ceased to feel,—his continued sighing,—gave him favour and saved his life. Here, again, at Jerusalem, search is made for those who have not shared in the previous pollutions; and on those found untainted,—those with both clean hands and pure heart, the mark is set.

Jerusalem was but a type of the world at large. It is condemned before God, even in its most favoured and best cultivated spots, even within the most carefully fenced enclosures. Here, and not simply in the barren wilderness outside, in Satan's own peculiar domain, a tide of evil runs high and strong. Sins of every form, and every dye; sins against God and sins against man, increase and abound. And our security lies, as we well know, or ought well to know, in something of a more secret nature, of a more precious quality, than that we may seem to derive from our standing in the Redeemer's church,—in our character as his worshipping servants. There is a further test, by which we must try ourselves, for by it *He* forms his judgment of us. The abominations done among us are not far to seek, not difficult to find; they face our notice every day. They take every sort of shape,—of deadly error propagated, of flagrant sin committed, of false principles, loose opinions, filthy conversation, widespread lying, dishonesty, and roguery. When we know that things of this kind *abound*, and are widely practised, how much depends on *us* for our ultimate safety and acceptance, in the day when God judges the world.

According to the principles of righteousness, of how much consequence it is that not merely we have *kept aloof* generally,—that our garments are comparatively unspotted,—that we have not these things on our con-

science,—but that the frame of our minds respecting them, the sentiments with which we have regarded all, have been those of unquestionable grief and abhorrence. For this is what the Lord looks into narrowly,—not only if we have no share, but no *sympathy* in them; whether our hearts have inclined to, or wholly revolted against them; whether we called them by smooth names, and were ready to palliate and make light of them, or whether we were really shocked and grieved by the want of principle, and the absence of righteousness, and of the fear of God, which all such sins betoken. These are they who are marked out for preservation, in a world sending up its loud and daily cry for vengeance. These are they whom God takes under his wings, when he finishes his work; they who, living in the midst of abominations of various kinds, have not witnessed them with indifference,—have bewailed them in secret before him,—have carefully kept themselves pure from the contamination, whether of opinion or of practice,—have had no sympathy, no relish, no inclination to partake. On the contrary, they have been absolutely grieved at heart,—not that the feelings only have been shocked because of these sins, so common in the world, but the heart mourns in secret over them. How precious is this mark, and yet how rare! This is a sign, not to be mistaken, of the presence of the Holy Ghost. His grace only can give the affections, and tastes, and feelings, such a turn, so unlike their natural bias. And “*God will not forsake the work of his own hands.*”

And observe, *Secondly*, the same words also shew us their *public spirit*, “*they sigh.*” And not merely in apprehension of their personal dangers,—of private calamities in which they shall be involved, when God punishes, as surely he will, the guilty city. They do not think of themselves alone, and their own individual security, when they weep over the sins of Jerusalem. They mourn a dishonoured God—a polluted sanctuary—an apostate church. For themselves they know are in safe keeping; God will not slay the righteous with the wicked. But their hearts tremble for the ark of God. They cannot see without sorrow, the insults he is receiving,—without fear and compassion, the misery

and wrath their fellow-citizens are heaping up. Instances of this spirit are numerous in scripture. It seems part of the character and of the nature of a renewed man, a marked feature in the portraiture of a servant of God. There is David, with his zeal—"rivers" of waters, tears of love and pity, "*run down my eyes, because men keep not thy law.*" "*Do not I hate them that hate thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?*" Elijah is "*very zealous for the Lord of Hosts,*" because "*they have thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword.*" Paul has unfeigned grief, because "*many walk, of whom he tells us, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.*" See Eli sitting on the way-side seat, that he may catch the first of the battle. It is not so much the results of that battle to Israel, nor the fate of his two sons in it, that most deeply moves him; his heart trembles for the ark of God. Look at the wife of Phineas—her own domestic bereavements, bitter as they certainly were—the loss of her husband and father-in-law, less affected her than the mighty national calamity just sustained; and she called her child "*Ichabod,*" because "*the ark of the Lord was taken, and the glory was departed.*"

This is a precious spirit; a quality God greatly approves of; the exact opposite of that selfish temper which his gospel strikes at so emphatically. It must not be, that our own spiritual well-being should fill our minds with unmixed content. Even our own soul's concerns—great and momentous as they are, are not to have exclusive attention. The interest of the Redeemer's kingdom demands a largeness of heart. This sort of sensibility needs to be studiously cultivated. The eyes must be made to look outwards; the oneness of the whole body of Christ must be realised—so that when "*one member suffers, all the members shall suffer with it.*" To the existence of this precious spirit we owe all that is done in the church, for the evangelization of the world. To the want of it, we must attribute that no greater efforts are made, and no more liberal things devised for carrying on the Lord's work. For whatever success has followed the efforts hitherto

made, the blessing that has been vouchsafed, while thankfully owned, should be also taken as a tacit reproach, that had more been attempted, greater results would have been witnessed; that had God been put to the proof, it would have been seen whether he would not have "*poured out a blessing that there would not have been room enough to receive it.*"

Whatever may have been already accomplished in the establishing and building up of Christ's house in the world, what reason have his servants still to sigh and cry, while ignorance and infidelity, and worldliness still so thoroughly pervade it. Sad features enough they see at all times in the aspect of things—dark clouds and tempests lowering and hanging about. The battle continues fierce and strong. Slowly, very slowly, here and there only, does the Redeemer's kingdom seem manifestly to gain ground, and the prince of this world to sustain a signal defeat.

Ireland is just now one of these bright spots, far more, perhaps, at present, than any other part of the world. The Lord is revealed, and his standard flocked to from all sides. In town and country, the spirit of enquiry is awakened; the eyes of thousands seem suddenly opened to see the errors and delusions of the faith they have been taught. They see the contrast between Popery, with its ceremonies, traditions, and inventions,—and Christianity as represented in the Bible. The light of the Gospel of God has shined into their hearts; and simply by a reference to *his word*, by comparing their false doctrines with the Bible's teaching, they discovered how dangerous and unlawful were their former practices and worship. In reading the accounts of what has taken place there, an impression is given of the power of the word of God. God works by means of his own word. It is the Bible that has revealed to them their mistakes. The Bible has shown them a safer and better way. In the Bible they have found a pearl of great price. That has been the means of introducing them to their Redeemer. He, whom their old religion represented as almost inaccessible, and who seemed to stand far off in the distance, hardly to be discerned from the host of in-

ferior mediators placed between him and them,—the Bible has shown them as easy of access, and close at hand; a great High Priest, touched with the feeling of their infirmities, opening a "*new and living way*," whereby they may draw near "*with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith*." The extension and deepening of scripture knowledge among the people enables them to discern "*the precious from the vile*." They have chosen the better part, and by Divine grace, they have been enabled to keep to it. Threats and opposition have failed to make them waver.

The completeness of the change in some has been very remarkable. Roman Catholics, who, a little while ago, were most violent against the reformation, most prejudiced against the Bible, and called it the Devil's book,—who would curse and groan, and shout when the missionary and readers passed,—have first *slackened* in their enmity, then *enquired*, then *embraced* the faith "*they once destroyed*."

A great door, and an effectual one, is opened, and, as was to be expected, there are many adversaries. But persecution does not seem to terrify; opposition does not hinder the work. We bring no reports of converts falling off intimidated; of the missions dwindling through the adverse influences brought to bear upon them; of successful efforts made by priests to stop them; of diminishing interest among the people. So far from this, the tide is still in full flow; the word of God grows and multiplies—the converts stand firm; the building rises—the hindrances offered are overcome; the hand of the Lord is with it. There is but one thing to seek—the aid of christians—the co-operation of christians—the gifts and prayers of christians. We appeal to your public spirit. If ye have indeed the Lord's mark on your foreheads—if ye "*sigh and cry for the abominations*" done in the land,—should not his cause, as it struggles onward through the world, enlist your sympathies?—should not ye rejoice to be summoned into the harvest, to see an opened door, and to occupy the ground? When we, seeing devoted men of God sacrificing their lives, and leaving their

bones to whiten on the shores of Patagonia—when we see them undertaking an enterprise so desperate, so forlorn, that it scarcely seemed justifiable to attempt to enter yet by a door so fast closed; will not their zeal and precious spirit put us to shame, if, when the finger of God points to Ireland, we should either unconcernedly put off, or listlessly take up a work that is lying ready to our hands. There is no place for saying here, there is a lion in the way. There is no lion, there is no fair objection to make; no difficulty to make that the success is questionable. Our hands may find in that country abundance to do, for God's glory, and our fellow-men's salvation. God give us the ardour that inspired Nehemiah and the Jews when they set themselves to restore the ruined temple. Then the people had a mind to work; they were men of a public spirit, for they built not only for themselves, not only each in his own house, but at the wall of Jerusalem, which they regarded as the security of the whole city. Nay, some there were, who had no houses of their own in Jerusalem; men from Jericho, on the wall, building as deliberately and zealously as any, for they loved the city of God; they were men of large hearts, and public spirits. While at the same time the building of the wall round Jerusalem did not prevent, it rather involved and demanded, that each inhabitant should build over against his own house; thus, in providing for his own security, he contributed to the welfare of the community at large.

In conclusion, let us look at this subject, first, in the way of *personal* godliness; sighing for, and struggling against our own iniquities, and rejoicing for ourselves in God's salvation; thus building the wall at our own house. This is the principal thing. What avails it that the wall be built round Jerusalem, if it lies dilapidated and unrepaired at my own door?

Then, united with this, ever and inseparably associated with it, should be a public spirit; sighing over the rebellion and enmity of the world to God; setting up our banners at every spot of it, in his name; raising on every side the bulwarks of Mount Zion.

See, brethren, that ye abound in this grace also.

We do not seek to wring out contributions by importunity, for God loveth a cheerful giver ; and, if aware of your own separate responsibility to send everywhere the word of salvation,—if you know the need of the gospel for every creature, and the free course given to it in Ireland,—if ye have learnt to give on *principle*,—if ye appreciate the privilege of fellow-workers with God—then, from the largeness of your hearts, more than anything I can say, we may hope liberal things at your hands.

Preached on occasion of a Charity.

SERMON IX.

Philippians iv. 4, 5, 6.—“ Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing : but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.”

THE Apostle here presents us with a short manual or *vade mecum* for daily use, consisting of a few valuable counsels, so concisely expressed that there is no difficulty in remembering them,—so weighty in their import, so wide and comprehensive in their scope, as to afford directions for the daily conduct of life, in all events and circumstances. Let me recommend it to you as a motto for the opening of a new year, with every good wish for your welfare and happiness, that however chequered its events may be to some of us, all may work for good, as it assuredly will, if we are among the lovers of God ; and let us, as Luther says, shake this particular apple tree of Scripture, and see what pleasant and wholesome fruit it will yield us.

There are, you observe, first, a few short sententious counsels given, and these are followed up by a great and precious promise. Observe, here, the close connection between following the counsels, and enjoying

the promise. It is implied that neglect and carelessness are attended with loss and discomfort, and experience proves it.

The counsels themselves are three:—

The first is one that brings out with great clearness, the peculiar nature of christianity—Rejoice! How much that injunction tells of the real character and heart of God, and the real nature of his service and his kingdom; it is to be a joy of satisfaction such as a man feels in his home. The joy of a soul that has come back home to God—redeemed out of bondage—brought nigh, by the blood of his Son, and admitted to Divine confidence and friendship. Having thus come nigh him—got over all your fears that there were no kind words or gracious looks for you—and your sloth and indifference, so as to have stirred up yourself to take hold, what is it you found? A friend, an omnipotent, unchangeable friend! You are placed on a footing of cordiality with your maker; estrangement as well as enmity is at an end. When you know your God, and see his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, reconciling sinners to himself, your old suspicions, and reserve, and slavish dread, give place to a calm joy, for you understand him now, you see that all along he has meant you well. You were invited long ago to enter on the high and honourable position of his friend, you were assured of his friendliness, and when you come at last to know him, you can bear witness that it is an utter misconception, a great dishonour, to think of him as a severe master, putting a ban on all that could make his creatures happy.

He is himself the surest and fullest well-spring of joy; the soul can no where else drink such deep draughts of it; its desires can be allayed at no other fountain; its dignity and capacity is such that the whole world cannot content it long. That which shall afford it real and lasting joy must indeed be something inexhaustible: and thus saith the Psalmist, "*in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.*" It is a joy, too, of security, as of a man in a safe retreat, with a rock to which he can always resort; a shelter to fall back on. But dont

imagine that religion is all joy, or even chiefly and constantly so. Other experiences will have their share.

It is of especial importance to notice, that those who know most of the terrors of the law will drink deepest of this joy. The more we comprehend the nature and fearfulness of Divine wrath, by reason of sin,—(who knoweth its power?) the better fitted shall we be to appreciate the value and excellence of him who is the hiding place. The soul over which God's mightiest waves and storms have gone, the conscience that has felt most strongly what it is to be under condemnation, must know best the value of a sure hope. When all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, with what feelings of perfect security did Noah find himself shut in the ark, while full of pity for the doomed ones outside—with what joy his heart beat when he knew and felt himself safe!

Let us not rest satisfied, brethren, without participating in these feelings. Let us seek a strong faith to lay hold of him who stretches out his arm, to yield a full committal of our soul and all its interests to his care, in the confidence that he will keep it safe unto the end.

You observe the light the Apostle places it in: this joy in the Lord is not held above our heads, almost beyond reach, and not to be looked for, or thought of, until a great way on the road,—a privilege that none but christians of the highest stamp and first quality can be admitted to,—he speaks of it as a duty, a thing to be done in the way of obedience. We are to please God by rejoicing; such intimate and friendly terms he would have us on—so near he would draw us to himself—he thirsts for our best affections—it is our own fault if we do not find abundant matter for joy in what God is, and what he doth for us. A perpetual, unintermitting joy it should be; we are to be *always* rejoicing. This mortal, this sinful life will bring us, in the natural course of things, its griefs and its joys. We know not what black cloud may be in the horizon advancing to darken and dissipate the sunshine of the present moment; but here is the Apostle's counsel—"Rejoice

always." You may have a time when, if you are not able to rejoice in Him, no other spring of joy will open. Your heart must laugh while it weeps—rejoice in its sorrows—mingle its tears with singing. Thus the first counsel respects our behaviour and temper towards God.

The second directs our conduct and spirit among men—*moderation*. What is this quality, which, as christians, we are to be distinguished for, which is to be conspicuous in us, and incumbent on us to shew before the world. It is not a counsel of prudence he is giving; he clearly does not mean by moderation not to have too much zeal or energy—not to be too enthusiastic or earnest, lest enemies may be stirred up thereby. He rather appears to mean to express self-control;—that valuable quality which will produce in our tempers a spirit of mildness and gentleness, and in our relation to the world, the opposite of the eager disposition which characterizes its children, carried away by the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life. Thus, for example, with respect to the frame of our spirits, he is anxious we should be conspicuous for moderation, that we should obtain the power and the habit of governing ourselves,—be the masters of our tempers and passions, not carried away beyond the occasion. It is not that he would have us without all regard to natural temperament and character, so crushed and restrained that nothing could even move or stir our spirits; he does not demand an unimpassioned equableness and absence of all impulse, all enthusiastic feeling, that would make us very like mere animated machines; it is a power of keeping within bounds he is anxious we should possess. It must be seen that we can maintain a composed spirit within us, where there may be much to ruffle it,—that we can regulate both appetites and tempers, and keep them in subjection.

Again, with respect to our pursuits in life—our calling and business in the world. The christian is to be distinguished by his moderation, as, says the Apostle in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, 6th chapter and 12th verse,—“*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things*

are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." It is not for him, a stranger here, to live in the world like those who mind earthly things (being not his own, but the Lord's)—a stranger and pilgrim here, to live in the world like those who mind earthly things; simply and solely that he may make money as fast as his neighbours. It becomes him not to be seen struggling and pressing headlong forward in the general race for riches, as if health, peace, and time were worthily sacrificed for such a prize. His moderation must not be seen in negligent or apathetic habits,—it will not make him live a listless life, always behind hand, whilst all is activity and energy around; but it will have a very strong, repressing, composing effect on his character and his habits. He remembers the conditions and the facts of his existence here, he is under the constraining power of this truth—"the Lord is at hand." That recollection will make him moderate.

Why should I be striving for appearances, to make a figure before the eyes of men, to attract their envy and admiration? "*The Lord is at hand,*" and when he comes, of what worth will be the estimation of the world? Why should I strain and struggle for greater worldly elevation than I have the natural capacity and opportunity to reach, dissatisfied as long as I am behind others to whom Providence allots a larger portion? "*The Lord is at hand,*" and then all worldly distinctions must fade away. The secret of maintaining moderation lies in that recollection—"the Lord is at hand." If I am soon to be detached from the world, how moderate it becomes my aims in it to be. The moderation of christians is to be a testimony to the world that the Lord is near; their spirit will be so opposite to the prevailing one,—"*not slothful, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*" This will be the practical proof, that they reckon not in finding their rest here, but look for "*a better city, whose builder and maker is God.*"

The third counsel is one of a more private nature,—touching our interior frame of mind, and initiating us into the secret of passing smoothly and easily across

the waves,—of meeting the changes and chances of this world, without being overwhelmed and thrown off our balance. “*Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*” The Apostle greatly insists on this: “*I would ye were without carefulness,*” that is, without anxious forethought, such as divides the soul, and draws it two ways. Preventing our serving the Lord without distraction—unsettling and unhinging our spirits, and moving them from their resting place. It is not on a few points we are to divest ourselves of this carefulness, and forbid it spreading over and filling our minds,—it is to be careful for *nothing*. Let nothing whatever fill you with anxious care.

While every position—every occupation—all circumstances bring anxieties and cares, the direction is *not* to be careless, unconcerned, without thought, without foresight;—but do not be anxious—fret not thy spirit about the cares of thy condition—give no place to distressing fears, even when darkness gathers round you; get the confiding spirit of a child, that trusts without any gloomy forebodings, the power and affection of its father. How blessed to go through this year in the spirit of this command. What composure and tranquillity of spirit will be our portion if we can do so.

It would indeed be impracticable in itself,—a rule that in this shifting world none could observe,—if we were not shewn where to take our cares when we have divested ourselves of them. To be careful for nothing in ourselves, we must be able to transfer elsewhere the responsibility of caring for us. “*Let your requests be made known unto God,*” is the simple prescription for avoiding that anxious, weary weight of care, under which innumerable spirits are sinking. “*In every thing by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God.*” Not only in a few great, momentous matters, worthy, we might think, of the interference of a God, but in lesser, every-day troubles and burdens, let this be your practice. Let the uneasiness of a moment be made known in private,—

let nothing be thought too insignificant for God ;—let everything be transferred to him at once. This that threatens to oppress my spirit, to which my thoughts turn with anxious sadness,—this, that throws a gloom over my soul as often as the recollection of it occurs,—let me not keep it close, an inmate to disquiet and vex me, but with prayer and supplication it must be laid before God. He may not remove it,—“*for this I besought thrice*,”—saith Paul, chafing under the discomfort of his thorn in the flesh, whatever it might have been,—and he did not get rid of it,—it remained with him a thorn still. But this he got by making his request known : it was blunted—the sharp points that harrassed and annoyed him were taken off,—his spirit was soothed and tranquillized by the assurance—“*My grace is sufficient for thee*.”

To these counsels, then, is tied the promise of peace ;—this shall follow to every one who takes heed to them. “*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*.” Not merely peace from God shall flow into our souls, but the peace of God ; a portion and share of that which he enjoys in himself shall guard and garrison our hearts and minds, that we shall not be afraid of evil tidings, our hearts being fixed, trusting in the Lord. You understand, of course, it is not by attending to these rules that we attain a state of peace, but to the feeling of its being “*through Christ Jesus* ;”—the state of peace is reached only through the atonement,—“*justified by faith, we have peace with God*.” There may be the state without the feeling ; so again, there may be a feeling of peace proceeding from insensibility and apathy,—a feeling without the reality, a false and perilous security. The true peace is that which God pours into the heart, and is maintained by looking at the cross ; kept up by diligence in the ways of holiness,—lost when neglected. So that, for the full enjoyment of this peace, these rules must be heeded. The promise is linked so closely to them, because they are the signs of the regenerate soul ; they prove to us that ours is the faith of God’s elect ; they distinguish it from that faith which, being

alone, is dead ; they evidence it to be a living operative principle in us. Here, then, are some aims for us,—get the habit of rejoicing,—beware of a brooding spirit. If, indeed, we have sought reconciliation,—are pressing heavenward,—have cast our all for eternity on Christ,—we must not be fearful of presumption, that it is not for *us* to have joy in him ; there is a rich provision of joy for us in the gospel. “ *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*”

In conclusion, permit me to press on you this duty of setting an example of moderation to the world. Amidst its hurry and bustle, the general hasting to be rich, the struggles and pushings to get forward, and secure as large a portion as possible,—it becomes the servants of Christ to shew their desires are moderate ; that they don't share in the eager unsatisfying thirst, but that they are aware of their condition here as strangers ; that they know both how to be abased, and how to abound, to buy, as though possessing not, to use the world as not abusing it.

It is required for us to divest ourselves of anxious carefulness—to realize the unceasing thought and care of God. We shall save ourselves much distress and solicitude, by consulting him, and telling him what we wish, accompanied with thanksgiving for the privilege and favour of pouring all our request about everything into his ear. So shall we drink in “ *the peace which passeth all understanding.*” “ *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*”

How happy they, who are able to say, at the close of this year, I have tried to live on more intimate terms with God, and to unloose my affections from the world, and to trust in him. The result has been a peace I have never enjoyed before.

Preached New Year's Day, 1853.

SERMON X.

1 TIMOTHY, i. 15—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

WERE it not for the details in prophecy respecting the Messiah's first appearance upon earth, we could not be surprised at the exalted ideas the Jews had of the glory that should attend it. The world visited by its Maker! God coming down to man in human form! How divinely majestic must be the appearance! What great and extraordinary signs shall not give notice of his coming! Hosts attending his steps. What a gathering and flocking to him of those dwelling in the lost world he comes to save, in order that they might welcome and worship the Deliverer! Vain and unfounded anticipations these! How different the visit as it actually took place.—It had been promised for ages.—Adam heard of it when he stood trembling before his Maker, and God told his ruined creature the good which he purposed. One generation after another beheld it afar off, looked forward to an ordained salvation, and a chosen Saviour presently to appear. None knew exactly when it might take place;—but as the real time drew nearer, the general expectation grew more intense—high anticipations were formed of it—a covenant people were on the watch for the Deliverer and Ruler of man, by whom they expected to be raised up to more than their ancient honour and greatness. When the fulness of the time at length arrived, God sent his Son; and then how groundless and vain those anticipations appeared! In what deep humility Christ the Saviour came! It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. He took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh, lived in humiliation, poverty, necessity, and grief.

One evening a child is born in an inn in one of the small towns of Judea, his mother and her husband being in humble life; the inn was full, a number of guests were there collected for the same purpose as themselves,—

"they all went to be taxed." The parents were poor and so were obliged to accept such accommodation as their means commanded. While there, *"the time came that she should be delivered,"* and when she *"brought forth her son,"* she was fain to lay him in a manger, *"because there was no room for him in the inn."* The event excited little notice in the house, no more was known than that a poor woman had given birth to a child. All knew well where Christ was to be born—patriarchs, prophets, and scribes, could tell Herod in a moment,—at Bethlehem; yet none suspected this birth so obscurely taking place, to be that which many prophets and kings rejoiced to see afar off in faith, and desired that they might live to behold. The child born that night at Bethlehem was the Christ that was to come—and yet none were conscious of the real quality of the new inmate so silently and unobtrusively appearing. That inn, brethren, was a true type of the world. It had no room for its Lord. None of the guests that thronged it observed or welcomed his arrival. There was some excuse for them; they were far from conjecturing who the child really was. Joseph and Mary were from Nazareth, temporary sojourners like themselves, not residents at Bethlehem. They little imagined that on that very day the fulness of the time had come. None knew it, but a few shepherds, and *they* were told by angels, so that their indifference and neglect of their Divine Visitor was not surprising.

But, for ours, there is no excuse; and if the tidings angels brought *"to you,"* can give no joy, and fail to draw out a gush of thankfulness and gratitude in the heart; as if the birth is *really* of no more consequence than the unconscious guests of the inn supposed it,—how deplorable is your state. How little men know of themselves and of their greatest and most pressing wants. The heavenly host celebrate with songs what those most concerned in were as yet unconscious of. How welcome would be these tidings elsewhere! If one could be heard now proclaiming them among those who slighted them when really available, and who now know too well from what dreadful woe sinners need to be saved, how would they cling about the messenger.

What joy would it be could they hear it said, "*To us a child is born,*"—that Jesus, the Saviour, is come. This is the gospel of glad tidings in its simplest form, in fewest, plainest words—a Saviour for a lost world has appeared. What does this visit betoken? What shall we gather from it?

First—From the exalted rank and divine nature of Him who comes upon this errand amongst us, we gather the utterly ruined state of the sinners to whose rescue he came, and the immense cost of their salvation. It is enough to have once sinned to be reduced to this. Our first parents sinned *once*, and their single transgression drew upon them their Maker's wrath—shut heaven against them—deprived them of all the divine favour, and ruined their peace. Death was the penalty they inherited from *one* sin. So it is with us; there is no comfort to be had (though many try to find it) in the supposed fewness or littleness of our sins. Confess yourself a sinner—acknowledge that—you need say no more. You have pleaded guilty, condemned yourself to be a sinner, and to be helpless and lost is the same thing. Your sin (supposing you could be charged with only one) has cast you into the arms of Satan, fixed you in the gripe of death, brought the black cloud of divine anger full over your head, polluted your nature. You are in the pitiless grasp of that holy law which must not even once be broken—you lie under its overwhelming curse—you are led away a helpless captive—you carry upon you the black marks of corruption and dissolution;—all this for sin in any shape—this utter ruin—this dark prospect—this helpless captivity, is the necessary consequence of sin.

Who is it then comes to the rescue? We might turn appealingly to angels, and they, doubtless, would answer with looks of deep compassion; but, even if all the heavenly host came down with Gabriel at their head, they might put to flight the legions of fallen spirits, and scare them from their spoil, but that would not *save sinners*. Salvation for us is not purchased by any victory of that sort, or decided by the issue of such a combat. *Force* is not the grand requisite for

redemption; there is a tighter grasp than Satan's on our souls. One unfallen angel, commissioned by the Most High, would be doubtless sufficient to make him loose his hold—to conquer and expel him. But what think you of the grasp of the broken law? It is at the tribunal of a righteous law we stand accused, convicted, condemned. Angels cannot help us there, the ransom it demands they cannot pay. It requires blood to make an atonement for transgression, "*the soul that sinneth it must die*;" and God who is pitiful and of tender mercy, and hath no pleasure in afflicting, yet cannot otherwise pardon. "*Without shedding of blood is no remission.*" This is the inexorable rule of justice. Another must be made sin, a sin-offering in our stead,—to bear our sin and curse, if we will escape ourselves.

When satisfaction is made, then God *can* forgive, and pledges himself to forgive freely, those that seek his favor by that means; yea, forgive in all *faithfulness* and *justice*, not out of sheer compassion and indulgence. Every sin must receive its punishment. In one sense sin is never pardoned, for if the sinner himself does not suffer its penalty, another must for him, he must have a substitute. God cannot forgive us as a father his son, as an act of pure clemency passing by the transgressions, taking no notice of it for this time; *justice* forbids that, and demands blood shedding or gives no remission. "*No man can deliver his soul, nor make atonement unto God for it.*" Where then shall I seek it? the question is asked in heaven—"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" It is answered, "*Then said I (Jehovah's fellow), Lo, I come to do thy will.*" The substitution is accepted, and the decree goes forth "*Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts, smite the shepherd.*" "*Forasmuch, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.*" To save sinners, God was manifested in the flesh.

And observe, *secondly*—The Son being the only possible Saviour, he was yet under no obligation to

come and save, nor the Father to send Him. When man was made, it was required of him as an indispensable duty to love his Maker with his whole heart. There was nothing hard or unreasonable in this requirement; it was right in the nature of things that the creature should love such a Creator, the whole of his love was God's due. His relation to his Creator, and the intrinsic excellence and beauty of the divine nature, made it binding on him to give it. And so just as his entire love and perfect obedience merited no thanks and in no way made God his debtor; so when the whole heart was turned from God, and enmity and disobedience filled it, man was an object not of pity, but displeasure. There was more reason why God should be *angry* than sorry; looking at us he could only find occasion for the most unsparing and severe judgment. We were utterly without claim upon his goodness, with no provocation we became his enemies, made cause with Satan in open rebellion and defiance, admitted the usurper's claim, crowned him prince, heartily gave in our allegiance, and yielded ourselves captives to him at his will. What then have we to plead against being treated according to our deserts? Is God unrighteous in the vengeance he takes on sinners,—the immediate banishment from heaven he devotes them to? Is there no plan set on foot to rescue them? No remedy devised for their evil case? Where they fall, must they lie? Does no one stoop to raise them up? or, can we substantiate any better claim on the forbearing pity of our compassionate Maker?

This is not *his* doing that we have lost his favour; it is not from any sudden unexpected dislike he took, or from impossible conditions imposed. No; but by *our own wilful transgression*. He can see nothing in *us* to move him to stretch out an helping hand. Wilful in our disobedience, obstinate in our enmity, had we been left to perish, there would have still been no charge against God. Was the law too severe that demanded from us the love of the whole heart? What God first approved of he cannot alter his mind about. If the law Adam broke was holy, just, and true, it remains so

still—there was no idea that we were too strictly dealt with. When redemption was planned, no thoughts of restitution existed, as if we had not had a fair trial and that some consideration was due to us. We appeared in our Maker's eyes inexcusably guilty, righteously condemned, deserving the fallen angel's doom.

The question of our recovery in our hopeless ruin lies in his sovereign pleasure. What will it please him to do? The world's fate hangs in suspense upon the answer. Whatever of mercy the world may experience, must come from divine grace, not from any claim it could establish. In himself alone can God find a reason and motive for doing us good. How forcibly I am sometimes struck by seeing how little this is felt! To hear some people talk, they seem to think it a condescension to have any religion at all, or to pay any respect to their Maker. Some seem to plume themselves on what they do, their prayers, their gifts, their charities, &c., as if it deserved immense credit, and the Almighty ought to be obliged for their setting such a good example; as if it were no small thing that they should be troubled with any religion at all. Miserable and awful infatuation! How entirely they forget, not only that they *cannot save themselves*—but that God is under *no obligation to save them*; that they never can raise themselves to a state or position where they shall not deserve to be damned; that nothing but Sovereign mercy and favour can give a hope of salvation,—that there is no obligation on him to do anything. He might abandon us to the consequence of our guilt, leave us to reap what we have sown, and to eat the fruit of our own doings, and yet manifest no undue severity. So it is not as an act of *justice*, but of pure free *grace* that Christ comes.

Observe, *thirdly*—He came *unasked*. To what shall we attribute the visit? The entreaties of the fallen family for such a Saviour? their moving cries for mercy? their professions of hearty sorrow, and vehement promises of service? No; not a sigh, or tear, or confession, or supplication was ever heard. With reluctance, even an acknowledgment of their sin was wrung. The first offenders were not without

attempts to excuse their guilt, and then stood dumb. And since then, what has the world cared whether it had a deliverer or not? And what would the thoughtless and frigid regular people among you care, if told that this was all a fable, and that Christ never did come; that no arrangement for salvation was ever made, that the communication of this day was a lying invention, proved to be quite unfounded. What would you,—the most of you, care—I say, what difference would it make to you? Would it break your rest—make your heart heavy—would you feel robbed of your best hopes—would it darken your future, and dim and blight your happiest prospects? Not the least. If God had waited till *need* was felt, till we begged, no Saviour had been yet sent. No prayers of ours brought him down. “*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*” That alone accounts for his coming. God’s thoughts of peace and good will had rise in his own free goodness and sovereign pleasure. The world he loved stood guilty and condemned, when he opened “*a door of hope.*” The Father loved it, and he gave his Son. But think not of his displeasure at our sin as hatred of *us*, which could only be appeased by sacrifice. True, his wrath was kindled, but what is the wrath of God? not vindictive feelings, not passionate resentment—it is vengeance, not revenge. God is not such an one as ourselves, he punishes because he is “*the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness,*” and because he yearned over us, and would avert the curse which justice called for. He gave his Son, who consented to let it fall on his own head.

And I may observe, *fourthly*—See with what purpose and resolution he came to save sinners. Not merely did he come unasked, because we felt no need and made no application—we never could have asked for him. Such a plan as the redemption of the world by the Lord Jesus Christ was beyond our *devising*. God only could have originated it—angels might have

sought long and ransacked all creation for a deliverer before they *thought* to venture into the Godhead to find him there. Such love, such condescension, would not enter their thoughts. *God* finds what none else could find, and where none else could have sought him. "*I have laid help upon One that is mighty.*" "*I have found David my servant, with my holy oil have I anointed him.*" "*I have found a ransom;*" and "*Hercin he commendeth his love towards us, (in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us).*" And for such an object he thinks it worth while to take a journey from heaven to earth. For *us* men, and for our salvation he came down and became man; and as *that* was the special and single object of his visit, so it was certain of its accomplishment.

His design was formed, and he came fully equipped to carry it out, with all the power and all the will, having well weighed all that the work required—that he should in human nature fulfil all the righteousness of the law, and in his person suffer its curse. Appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh—living in humiliation, want, and grief—submitting himself to contradiction and reproach—encountering the fury and malice of his own creatures—tasting all the bitterness of the wrath of God; He looked at the whole ransom price he must pay for our redemption;—the weary life as of a way-worn pilgrim who has no place, ending with a painful and ignominious death. Oh! what a life was to follow that dawn we are commemorating to day! and what a death it was to wind up with! What agonies shall rack that tender body now lying in the manger! What sorrows overwhelm that spotless soul! Yet he saw it all before him, and consented to the humiliation, because it was associated, not merely with the *hope* of saving sinners, but with the *certainty* of effecting salvation. He shall not pay such a price and receive nothing. He shall "*see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.*" It shall not be left in doubt whether sinners after all will accept his salvation, and seek his face; whether, perchance, his strength shall be spent in vain, and not one obdurate heart be moved by the spectacle of his love and bitter woes.

No; this was his settled conviction,—“*All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*” True, not all mankind shall be saved, though Christ came and the Spirit is given, all are not convinced. You ask, why not? This touches on the secret things of God; there is a barrier here that stops our enquiries. God giveth not account to us of any of such matters. But one thing is clear, it is on ourselves the short coming is chargeable; let sinners see to it. “*Who hath believed our report.*” The Saviour would have his mission published world-wide, the gospel proclaimed to every creature, but yet that is not enough. Far from it. He must do more than provide for our hearing, he must “*reveal his arm;*”—he must *lay hold*, and *draw*, yea, compel the heart. For though all *may* come to him, it is the most universal welcome, yet none *will* otherwise come. A strange posture of things!

But some of you know well the reality. Is it not so? Say, you who give proof that you are apprehended of Christ—was it quite submissively you yielded your heart to him? quite readily you listened to his voice? Did its first accents win your soul? Were you obedient directly its entreaties and commands fell upon your ear? Heard you it but *once* before you hearkened? Was there no time when you shut your ears against it, and would not see your Redeemer's claims? Was there no dallying, no *halting*, no trying to serve two masters? Quite the contrary. And since you gave in, conquered by his grace, has he needed to take no pains to keep you straight, with your face towards heaven? Is the old man so completely killed, the flesh so subdued, that he never sees you tampering, and has had to reach out his hand and bring you back, when you were making full speed for the way to destruction? Say, have you never kicked at the yoke, grown weary of the service? What can you not tell of the law warring in your members? Say, and believe!

What hope wouldst thou now have at this moment of salvation, after years, perhaps, of following Christ, if he let go thy hand, left thee to thy own course, to be thy own guide, as though now able to walk alone—if that strong yet gentle influence was withdrawn, which *forceth* thee—not against thy will, but which has renewed thy will, and “*worketh in thee to will and to do of his good pleasure.*” Oh! if Christ were not *determined*, if he left us to ourselves, our own unbiassed choice—if there were no *drawing* to repentance, no revealing of his arm, no *constraining*, no *compelling*—who then could, who would be saved?

Notice further, the persons he had in view, *sinners as he found them*. There is nothing *special* in the language—no limiting or defining that would shut out this one or that, or allow any one to say “*I’m not meant.*” “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*”—It is an aspect of universal mercy. What then stands in the way of salvation? Something does, else many more would avail themselves of it. What is that something? Where shall I look for it? Where find it? Not in God. It is not in any hindrance *he* secretly interposes; any impossible qualifications he demands beforehand. If there is anything to prevent, it is in myself; yet not in some special aggravation of my guilt—some peculiar unfitness or unworthiness in me, that makes the Saviour pass me by. It is not in some hopeless disqualification by which I am shut out, so that the petition I would fain breathe upwards dies away unuttered in despair. I cannot find it there. Oh! I know better where to look for it. I know better what that is that keeps me so far apart from One who came to save me—my own reluctance to combat for life. God has opened a highway for my approach; but it is *I* who have made a great gulf between. It is my desperately wicked heart, my misconceptions and mistakes. Is that a mocking voice, saying, “*Believe and live?*” Is he who says, he “*stands at the door and knocks,*” unwilling to come in? Does he who speaks in my ear, saying, “*Come near unto me,*” mean nothing but to delude and mock me? No. It is at *my* door all the blame lies.

How blind and ignorant have I been in thinking my *sins* and not my *unbelief*;—not my unwillingness stood in the way of salvation;—that were I less guilty I should have more hope—that if I felt more *earnest* and sincere, I should take courage. How mistaken in striving to make myself in a fit state for approaching the Saviour—in getting my heart duly affected, contrite, sorrowful. Oh! does he say, he will more readily accept you when you have done something he can look approvingly on, and for the sake of that take your case into consideration.

If he expected some perfection in thee before he would undertake thy salvation, would he then have said, “*Believe and thou shalt be saved?*” Should we then simply be told he came “*to save sinners?*” All he waits for is the cry, “*Lord save, or I perish;*” and when this has become the felt want of your soul, that he should stretch out his hand and save you, you are not far from the Kingdom of God. It is your *taking* him—*receiving* him—*opening* to him—*looking towards* him—reliance on him, he asks and requires. We all expect great things from God’s promises of mercy to mankind in Christ. We all *know* that Christ came to save sinners, and there numbers stop. They know these are promises of pardon—they know there has one come into the world to seek the straying wanderer—to recover the lost sheep—to heal the sick—yet they themselves have never met with the seeker of the strayed and lost. They have had no dealings with the Physician of souls—they simply know about him, they don’t actually *know him*—they have *heard of*, but not *found* him. And of what use, brethren, will this hearing, this knowledge be to us, if there is no meeting, and no greeting between this Saviour and our souls—no acquaintance set on foot—no definite relationship established of Saviour and sinner—of master and disciple—of brother with brother—friend with friend?

Suppose the Saviour just arrived on this errand of love in the world—suppose yourself the only sinner in it, for *you* he is seeking, towards *you* his *heart* yearns—to *you* for your acceptance as a present, as a free gift from God, he brings *himself*, his *life*, his *blood*, his

glory. You have not invited *him*; he made the first overtures. He seeks you, not you *him*. How will you behave? How meet his tenders? You hear him pressing them—he sees you desperately slothful and careless, and he gives reiterated calls; he can allow you but a limited time, and he *beseeches* you not to delay. But you go about the world from year to year followed by *entreaties*, and remonstrances, contented to know that he is come, and come to save you, and looking on that as your security.

Oh! will you (if you have not done it yet), will you now go forth to meet him. He expects to find no good thing in you—no penitence—no love;—this is a part of his salvation, not of your labour. It is thus he would *begin* to save you—softening your hearts—opening your eyes—renewing your mind—moulding afresh your affections; and for your acceptance you want none of these things, he provides what you want, he takes that matter into his own hands. He has pledged himself in becoming man, to open the fountain, and to bring in “*everlasting righteousness*” unto all who believe. Thus the one thing requisite for sinners to be saved, is to *receive* him who came. What welcome shall we this day give him? Here is God manifested, uttering his voice, crying, “*Behold me! Behold me! Receive me!*” And this is not the first time he has said it. He has long stood knocking at the door, but we were otherwise engaged, listlessly and inattentively hearing of him, and yet he is not gone. After so many repulses, so much neglect, “*The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of his Father), full of grace and truth.*”—John i. 14. Then what we have to do, is to seek and to discern the beauty of his person, that person both human and divine; to get our hearts affected by the view of it—to “*behold his glory as of the only begotten of the Father,*” which the Holy Ghost can shew us. Else what a dismal meeting at last, betwixt him and the souls that could see no beauty in him! Oh! seek him then till he is found of you;—His life in your souls, his salvation begun, the pledge of final salvation at the day of his appearing.

We may well rejoice in the event of this day—*Christ for us*; but it is only as the preparation for obtaining and finding *Christ in us*. *Christ for us* came into the world—*Christ in us*, is the pledge that he came not in vain. *Christ for us*, “*a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance.*” *Christ in us*, our sure and sole “*hope of glory.*” Let us fear then, brethren, and take good heed, lest after hearing all our days that *Christ came*, we should not be found in him—lest any of us should be obliged at last to lift up the melancholy and distressing cry, “*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.*”

Preached on Christmas Day.

SERMON XI.

Matthew x. 1, 2, 3, 4.—“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, Philip, and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew the publican, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.”

CERTAIN men Jesus had on different occasions, and in different places, selected and called away to be his constant personal attendants during his ministry on earth. He chose out twelve from the rest of his disciples, to have more immediately about him. They are here presented—standing round him—receiving a commission to go through the land of Israel—to announce him, and prepare his way—listening to the instructions he is giving them, and receiving a supernatural power to cast out devils, and to heal diseases.

Passing by the rest, there is one man in this group I wish you particularly to notice. Observe *him*, the last named of them, he who is *always* put last in every

list of Apostles; who has that last and dreadful appendage—the “*Son of perdition*:” who, while called, like the rest, from an obscure and humble station in life, to be a follower and Apostle of Jesus,—instead of sharing with them the honour in which their memories are held by the whole Church, and the still greater privilege of having *his* name written with theirs in heaven,—has come to be abhorred and detested wherever his deeds are told :—for whose crime no pitying heart can find any excuse,—in whose defence not a single voice is lifted up ;—who is consigned to undying infamy and execration, by that damning addition that always attends the mention of him,—“*Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.*”

The Scripture represents this man to us in three characters. First—look at him as he stands among the little group gathered around the Saviour. There you see him as an *Apostle*.

Observe him, next, in the garden, approaching his Master, with an armed band behind him, while he salutes him with a kiss. There you behold a *traitor*.

Once more he is presented to us—*alone*, and *dead*. There you gaze on a *suicide*.

Let us take these three pictures of Judas, hung up, as it were, in the Bible, for us to look at—and as we stand before each in succession, and gaze with astonishment on the portrait presented, we shall find some profitable reflections suggested.

The first represents him as one of that select band of twelve picked out from the rest of the disciples, to be the Saviour’s immediate companions ; his attendants first in humiliation, and afterwards in glory ; the founders of his Church on earth—the ambassadors and messengers of his gospel to all the world. And it does seem strange at first to us, who know what the real character of Judas was, that *he* is chosen to such an office. St. Peter lets us into the real motive for such a selection, in the 1st of Acts, where, speaking of Judas, he says,—“*The Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.*” The Scripture he refers to, is

PSALM xli. 9. "*Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*" It had not only been beforehand arranged in heaven that the Son of God should die, but all the circumstances of his death—the instruments that should accomplish it—the way it should be brought about—were all appointed long before, and spoken of in prophecy. "*He, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*" "*The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him, but woe,*" he adds, "*unto that man by whom he is betrayed.*"

It was no excuse for Judas that his treachery was foretold long before—that did not compel him to practise it. It was not with any intention of fulfilling God's purposes and predictions that he turned traitor. The guilt of none of those concerned in the Saviour's death,—of Judas, Pilate, or Herod,—is the least lessened by its having been all arranged beforehand, that he should die by their means. But you see how his selection to be an Apostle is accounted for. The Scripture had foretold that Christ's own "*familiar friend should lift up his heel against him.*"

This bad man was called to his side, and admitted to the closest intimacy. He was never treated differently from the rest—nothing was shewn in the Lord's behaviour, except once, when he said "*One of you is a devil,*"—to shew how differently he regarded him. He placed him on exactly the same footing—gave him the same counsel—shewed him the same kindness to the very last. Even as he sat one evening brooding over the black treachery he meditated—his master, instead of passing him by with undisguised abhorrence, condescended to wash his feet.

And yet Jesus not merely *suspected*—he had not merely *found out*, after more acquaintance, the sort of person he had made his friend; but he knew that man's character, and read what was in his heart, when he called him, and ordained him an Apostle. The whole three years Judas attended him, he never forgot his betrayer was at his side. None of his acts or professions deceived the Son of God. No assurances of af-

fection and sincerity blinded his character. And as he looked round at his little band of followers, his eye infallibly detected among them one who was "*a devil*."

You should observe, also, that while Judas, in his character of Apostle, was thoroughly seen through and understood by his master; his brethren seem to have had no idea of what he really was. Nothing in his behaviour led them to suspect him. When at last their Lord speaks out, and announces to them—" *One of you shall betray me*,"—you would perhaps expect all eyes to be fixed on Judas,—every finger pointing at him,—every tongue denouncing him,—that the eleven, rising with one accord, would unanimously denounce the veiled traitor. There is no doubt which of us is alluded to,—we know well who is the only man among us who could meditate such black treachery. But you recollect nothing of the sort took place. Each is more distrustful of himself, than suspicious of the real offender; and they begin to say unto Him, "*Lord, is it I?*" He, too, lest his silence should be noticed, joins in their cry of consternation, and, with audacious hypocrisy, asks, "*Is it I?*" They, so far from *guessing* who is alluded to,—so far from venturing to affix the stigma, begin to *enquire* of their Lord. How well he must have concealed his false heart in the close intercourse they held.

Mark, further, that the picture of Judas the Apostle is exactly like what any of his brethren—any *other* Apostle's would be. You would not know, or guess, or suspect from it, his differing from any of the rest. I see here a man in the complete garb and dress of a christian;—self-denial—separation from the world—zeal—apparent attachment to Christ, and labours in his cause—adorn, and distinguish him. This can be nothing less than a real saint—a devoted disciple, I am looking on. He seems to have all the distinguishing marks, the features, and the appearance of one. Is it possible that I can be deceived? As you gaze on the portrait, as you look at that man,—clothed in the same authority—their fellow-labourer in preaching the gospel—their fellow-helper in casting in the seed;—does not the thought strike you, how *extremely* like a hypocrite may be to a true christian?

What an astonishing resemblance here, between counterfeit religion and the genuine,—between a rotten heart and a sound one. Forget, for a moment, all you know of Judas's real character, and his after-history,—forget what he turned out,—look at the picture of the *Apostle*, not the *traitor*. Would *you* have suspected—would *you* have detected the lust that had dominion, and ventured to single out and denounce him as a wolf in sheep's clothing? Would you not have been as much deceived as they? You would never have guessed, as you looked at those twelve men, following Jesus, and sharing his privations, that a devil was *there*? You would have seen Judas, like the rest, renouncing his calling and means of living,—becoming an attendant of one, who, at their head, was devoting himself to preach the gospel,—then you never would have doubted him sincere.

But if the likeness be so strong,—if an unregenerate heart may be concealed under a veil of such sanctity and service,—if the fatal hand of hypocrisy may be so hidden by outward religiousness, that no eye but the All-Seeing one decries it,—how careful ought I to be, to ascertain that *I*, too, am not deceiving others, perhaps unconsciously,—that I am not deceiving myself. Would you consider it a sound and satisfactory evidence, that your state in the sight of God was good—that you were a converted sinner—had you all that Judas could allege? To have been chosen by the Saviour himself—to have given up all—absolutely thrown up your means of living, and cast in your lot with one who never promised any of the riches or grandeur of this world—to have gone about among your countrymen proclaiming and preaching this carpenter's son, in spite of incredulity, opposition, and scorn, as the true Messiah, come from God, and who was God,—and to have endured all the rudeness and malice of the unbelieving Pharisees and Priests,—Would you think all *this* proof enough that you are a child of God, and a sincere disciple of Christ? It was not enough to prove Judas one.

But then, put your case beside his—contrast what he did with what you have done. What are the things you

rely on as proving you to be a christian? Many think it is quite proof enough if they attend to their duties—are honest livers—well spoken of—harming none—kind—charitable—religious. Yet this, which may make *your* mind satisfied about your christianity, is not nearly all that is urged in favour of Judas. He did much more. Yet, with an outward friendship,—eating and drinking with his Lord—giving up all to follow him,—he was unregenerate, and never saw the kingdom of God.

Think of this, brethren, and as you value everlasting life and heaven, do not judge too hastily—easily—fondly—that your state is good,—that you are in Christ, and converted indeed. See, in Judas, how many things you may do, and yet want a thorough work of grace in your heart, without which none can see the Lord:—how you may be taken for a religious person—get praised for what you are and do—go beyond others in zeal and duties—shun like earthly acquisitions, and yet, after all, be none of Christ's.

Of course, then, there *was* a difference, though we cannot detect it in the picture. There are sure marks of salvation, though there is not a grace that has not its counterfeit. Christ's sheep may be known, though it is so easy to imitate their outward marks. The great distinction was here. Judas had no spiritual sight of Christ,—no spiritual knowledge of him,—he had never really eaten and drank with him, though he did eat the memorials. He *saw* Christ—*heard* Christ—*preached* Christ. He knew him in the flesh, yet seeing, saw him not. The Saviour, full of grace and truth, he never saw or knew. While even close to his person, he never came to him in his soul. The love of Christ never warmed his heart. Christ did not dwell in him. He was not his one thing needful. This was the secret of his unsoundness; this is the true test of being born again. This is the inner part of religion; its sap and marrow is in the hidden man of the heart. You are in God's sight as your heart is, not merely as your outward life is. The difference between a hypocrite and a christian reigns in their hearts; it is the being born of the spirit—passing from death unto life; dwell-

ing in Christ—having him in the soul—experiencing the genuine workings of faith and repentance, that makes the grand distinction between the true disciple and the almost christian. It is of great consequence to try ourselves by Scripture marks. Judas could not have joined his brother Apostle John in saying—“*We know that we are of God.*” He still wanted those evidences of being a child of God which pass in the court of heaven, for he did not love God, nor keep his commandments.

So much for Judas the Apostle.

The next picture presents us the same man,—but how changed,—the mask is off his face. That form of godliness, which looked so becoming, is stripped off. The inside of the whited sepulchre is laid bare—the sheep’s clothing is torn off—the wolf stands revealed. We no longer see Judas the Apostle—the disciple and attendant of Christ,—preaching and casting out devils in his name;—but Judas betraying his Master to the men who are thirsting for his blood, for the mean sum of thirty pieces of silver.

In gazing at this portrait, and as we look at him in that garden, with his band of men and officers behind, suddenly coming upon his defenceless Lord and Master, treacherously hailing him, and giving, in apparent friendship and attachment, a kiss;—as we see him engaged in what his heart has been some time brooding over, and acting the abhorred part of a traitor,—the reflection occurs, there is no saying to what lengths a man may be led, who has any sin unmortified in his heart. I do not mean by a mortified sin, one utterly killed and clean-rooted from the heart, so as never to tempt it, or stir there again. No. You have mortified sin in your heart when you have got its power weakened—when you are a match for it—able to make head against it, and succeed in keeping it down;—this is the very opposite of indulging it—feeding and cherishing it.

There was in the heart of Judas a sin he never got the better of. All the time he was following Christ, the love of money was his ruling passion. He never displaced it by receiving Christ into his heart; he hu-

moured it—fed it, by little petty depredations, on the bag which contained the money that supported the poor. He kept that sin in his heart in spite of all he saw, all he heard. Neither the character, nor the warnings, nor the promises of his Master, persuaded him to part with it. All the convictions—the impressions he must have received and felt, were neutralized and overpowered by the covetousness which had mastered his heart. Instead of being weakened by continued intercourse with Jesus, it grew and strengthened. Perhaps it was, that seeing how little was coming into the bag, and not being able to satisfy the greedy lust to which he had become a slave,—that for thirty pieces of silver, probably all he could get,—he bargains to sell his Master.

Observe, here, that one sin, thus kept, is enough to ruin you, and will do so, in spite of all else you may be. It is the sign of the unregenerate man, to be torn from all allowed sin, and yet to keep one hidden up, and cherished in the heart, though it may be only one, and that a little one. Judas was not in the condition of the Pharisees who scorned Jesus, and refused to believe he had come from God;—not in the condition of those who, after a little trial of his service, went back and walked no more with him. But he was a covetous man: his love of money was not a burden to him,—he never struggled mightily to be delivered from it. If he had applied to his Master for relief from it—if he had told his sorrow, and begged for help, how different would have been his fate.

Again; there is no knowing where it will stop, if you indulge a single lust in the heart; its demands are never satisfied. It leads you on to do what you never thought yourself capable of. It wants not many lusts to do this. A man need not be everything bad, to be deceived by sin. Keep only *one* in your bosom,—one that you cannot ask Christ to sweep out, and *that* will be a bridle in your mouth for Satan to guide you with down the road to destruction. One sin will choke all grace. One sin will neutralize all other good. One sin, clamouring for indulgence, occasioning no bitterness of heart,—one, that you force conscience, in spite

of all its remonstrances to digest and bear with,—one that meets with countenance and favour, is an inseparable barrier to your salvation.

And observe, once more, that Judas's sin was none of your gross, flagrant, horrible sins, that men shudder at. Not a thirst for blood—a revengeful spirit, that prompted his black treachery. His was a lust that finds favour in many hearts, where others are not admitted. It was just a fondness for money, an insatiable longing after gain. The man opened his heart to it—followed it blindfold—let it lead him on, step by step—and the portrait of Judas the traitor, hung up in the Bible, to be a gazing-stock to look at, and abhor, shews us where it landed him, and to what lengths he may go, who lets one sin have dominion in his heart.

There is one more likeness of him, taken a little after the last. Things come to a pass he never contemplated. He had no idea, when he betrayed Jesus to his enemies, to see him murdered by them. He never expected, I suppose, that they would really put him to death. He knew Jesus could, if he pleased, and doubted not he would free himself, and escape unhurt. But all turned out so differently. He sees his Master led away like a lamb. Horror at his own crime in betraying the innocent blood, now filled his soul, and in the agonies of remorse, he "*went and hanged himself.*"

This picture of Judas illustrates the waking up of an evil conscience. Its reproaches were so intolerable to him, that he sought escape in self-destruction; forgetting that he could not leave it behind in the world,—forgetting that through all eternity, its tormenting, ceaseless cry would be—remember—remember. It shews us that conscience *ought* not, *must* not be trifled with. Judas trifled with his. It had not its proper restraining effect on him. It did not keep him from pilfering from the bag small sums at a time. And mark what this petty dishonesty, this habit he got into of taking, by little and little, what was not his own, led to. He could presently reconcile his conscience to a far greater sin,—that of betraying his Master. This is taking an advantage of conscience, that it will

repay tenfold, whenever it insists on speaking out. You may lull it to sleep, you may seem allowed to put it to death. So silent it may be of the wrong things you do, or the duties which you have left undone. But it is sure to awake, and remind, and condemn. And its voice is often so terrible when lifted up in the last hours of life, that nothing can persuade the poor unpardoned sinner that it is still possible the Saviour may pity and rescue him. He gives himself up to absolute despair.

The main impression which these three pictures of Judas should leave on our minds, is, I think, this,—the necessity for us all to ascertain our being soundly converted—really born again. Judas had an unsound heart; it was never rent from his own favourite sin. This did not hinder his following Christ—his being an Apostle—his preaching and labouring for him;—but the love of Christ is subservient in his heart to the love of money. It prevented him delivering himself over to Christ, and making *him* his portion and happiness. He never got farther than the outer part of religion. He had never been a traitor if he had.

But regeneration,—the new birth of the soul, when experienced (and that is seldom, so few value or seek it), makes a man a partaker of God,—impresses his image upon him,—constrains him to serve God in newness of life. "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him—and he cannot sin—because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil.*"

SERMON XII.

2 Cor. xiii. 6.—“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”

THERE had sprung up at Corinth a number of false apostates, corrupting the simplicity of the Church and prejudicing it against Paul—their first instructor in the truth. The facility with which the Corinthians had listened to these deceitful workers obliged St. Paul to boast, as he says, “*somewhat more of his authority*,” and to remind them of the signs of an Apostle which he had shown and wrought among them. In a tone, half peremptory, half reproachful, he refers to their own christianity for evidence of his divine commission, and the truth of what he had taught. “*Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.*” “*Examine yourselves.*” You are undecided, it seems, whether I am really what I claim to be among you. You have begun to doubt whether Christ really spoke in me. Then “*prove yourselves.*” Examine and say whence ye had your faith. “*Know ye not yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*” It was from me you heard of Jesus, from my lips that you received the Gospel. Allow my apostleship, or confess yourselves reprobates, counterfeit coin, people with an *appearance* only of christianity about you. This seems the special drift of the advice and exhortation.

But, apart from the circumstances which made it such appropriate counsel to the Corinthians, it is at all times most seasonable advice, and peculiarly so at the commencement of the year. “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith,*”—take to pieces, as it were, the whole fabric of your personal christianity, as you would the machinery of a clock that sometimes wants to be renewed or put to rights. But it is no easy nor congenial task that is thus set us, nor one likely to be cheerfully and earnestly undertaken. “*Examine your-*

selves, whether ye be in the faith." The embarrassed merchant is not more reluctant to bring under scrutiny his disordered affairs, than are we to submit our spiritual condition to the same examination. How singular it is that with all our thirst for knowledge, our eagerness to understand all literature, all that is curious and interesting in nature, in science and arts; yet we decline acquaintance with ourselves; we stand aloof from intimacy of that kind with our own spirit. To be versed in that branch of knowledge, the most important and useful of all, is no part of man's natural desire. No; ambition would rather not look too close, too deeply, there; partly from dislike to the trouble such an investigation would cause; partly from fear and dread of the result; of the unsatisfactory state of things such a rigid scrutiny would bring to light. We feel a natural shrinking from being closeted with our own spirits, almost as if they were disagreeable inmates, with whom it were best to have as little intercourse as possible. Among outward objects we can always find materials to occupy and interest our thoughts. With no effort we send them abroad to range amidst the immense variety that presents itself. The effort rather is to keep them at home, to turn them inward. We would accept almost any employment, however irksome, rather than be shut up with no company but ourselves.

"Examine yourselves." What is the object,—the aim, of this unwelcome task? To find out how our souls do, the degree of health in which they are; whether we have the reality of that which we profess; if, while calling ourselves believers, we actually are such; if, while thinking ourselves in the way to Heaven, it is a well ascertained fact, not a mere guess or conceit, that we are so; if, while professing to believe in the necessity of being *born again*, there is the spirit of Christ really within us. Since we are to be tried by fire, and the personal christianity of every one of us is to be subjected, privately, as it were, and separately, to the most searching test of its genuineness, this ought to be enough to conquer all reluctance to the employment, and to set us busily and earnestly,

from time to time, upon the examination of ourselves. It is not an investigation that, after all, will do no more than gratify mere curiosity; not a search for what, after all, is not worth the pains taken to discover it; not a toilsome enquiry into an abstruse subject that may possibly baffle every effort to understand it. No. If, among all our interests, there is one on which we peculiarly need to be well informed, which, if we would promote, must be specially watched and looked into, it is this, in which our eternal and well-being lies.

It is not of half the concern to you to know what money you are worth, or what the world thinks of your merits, claims, and character, as to know the quality of your religion: to be sure that the life of God is in the soul, that the power of God goes with the form of godliness. When a large amount of counterfeit money is in circulation abroad, a man is anxious to assure himself that what he has in his purse is of full weight pure metal. When we have too good reason to know that a great deal of what passes for religion, much of what is professed, is a thing of nought, spurious and false; unless we value our christianity less than gold, we shall bring it to the test, and not feel at ease until we have reason to believe it to be genuine, such as He who will weigh it will allow to pass.

"*Examine yourselves*" implies, for one thing, that it is possible to ascertain this:—"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe" (still more steadfastly) "*on the name of the Son of God.*"—1 John v. 2, 13. How strange and inexplicable it would be if it were otherwise. If it were a fixed condition of our lot here that we should go through our pilgrimage on earth, and draw nigher, day by day, to the invisible and eternal world, without being able to do more than conjecture in the vaguest way what is to be our fate there; that it should be impossible for us to find out with any degree of accuracy what reception we shall meet with there, and in which world our final home will be allotted to us. If obliged by a stern law, in spite of all our efforts, to obtain some light on a subject so momentous, so vitally

affecting us, so intensely interesting to the true christian ; and if compelled to walk on utterly in the dark, or with only the most indistinct and glimmering indication of the path hardly visible to us ; if really beyond our ken whether our faces are set Zionwards or not, our feet in the narrow way, ourselves Christ's—this would be disheartening in the last degree.

But it is not so ; the only bar to our knowledge of this is, our own indifference and astounding carelessness. It is within the reach of every one to know, with accuracy enough to relieve him of harassing fears and suspense, whether he is in the faith ; whether Jesus Christ is formed in him ; if he is sincere ; if he has the power as well as the form of godliness. It is quite possible to learn if the soul is committed to Christ, if one's guilt is laid down at his cross, if the spirit is at work in the soul, if the heart has so much sense of sin that it mourns its corruption and loathes itself before God, if there is any diligence and effort to please God, if there is in you a spirit different from that which manifests itself in, governs, and pervades the world. You may discover all this, whether there are these dispositions, tastes and feelings, or not, by examining yourselves.

You need not be particular to enquire whether there has been a certain order and sequence of feelings and emotions in what has taken place within. It is a fault in some religious books, otherwise excellent, that in describing the passage of the soul from death to life—the nature and method of conversion to God—they lead to the impression of its being necessary for all to go through certain stages in a prescribed order ; and by insisting too much on this, they keep a soul in earnest to get forward somewhat in restraint—they run the risk of keeping the soul from the Saviour whom it is the object by all these processes to lead it to. There is no reason to expect a regular course in these things. The substance of the work and its effects are the same in all ; the ways in which it is carried out are widely different. What you have to examine yourselves about is not whether you have begun at a certain point, and your experience tallies with that of others,

but if that change which distinguishes the godly man from the man of this world is visible in you ; whether your heart, no matter how or when, is broken for your sins, for your conduct against your Maker,—whether any fruits of the spirit show themselves in your life, temper, and conversation. It is in order to ascertain such things as these that we are each recommended to examine ourselves.

Shall I allow any dread of what I may meet with to deter me from prosecuting this work ? Shall I shrink from carrying the candle of God's word through the chambers of my heart, from a suspicion that it may reveal a state of things there not so favourable as I would fain believe ? Am I such a coward that I dare not set forth on a journey of discovery into regions perhaps hitherto profoundly unknown into myself ? Men may always be found to offer themselves for the most hazardous and formidable enterprises ; there are no rigours nor dangers some may not be found ready to brave for the sake of discovering what possibly, after all, is not to be found, or if found, not worth the search.

Here is an object well worthy of the longest and most painful search, from which there is no fear of your returning baffled and disappointed, as ignorant as you went. But few care to make it, for it is not rocks or seas, continents or deserts, that are to be explored, but the depths of a man's own being : the motives, feelings, and imaginations that fill his heart and govern his spirit. It is not that we are without direction, or energy, or perseverance to examine what may present itself as worthy of investigation. It is the subject of examination that we dislike ; we shrink back, and either wholly decline, or put it off, when the proposal is to examine ourselves.

But although it is possible, yet it must be acknowledged that *it is difficult*, to ascertain if we are in the faith. "*Examine yourselves*" implies that Paul speaks as if a hurried glance or brief inspection could not decide. There are fatal facilities for passing a false judgment on ourselves. Our self-love, indolence, pride, carelessness, supply them. You

may be decaying in bodily health, and be quite unconscious that an insidious disease is working its way, while no symptoms but those of health are as yet apparent; ten times more open to deception are you about your soul's health. In that department of your being, the spiritual part, there is not a grace of the Holy Ghost but has its counterfeit, so like the original, that we need to look closely before we decide; what has the *look* of grace, and conversion, and godliness, may so easily be mistaken and so long pass unsuspected, for the reality, that it is needful to examine closely. You know a forged bank note may be made so like a genuine one that it may baffle even a minute scrutiny: a very experienced eye alone is able to detect the imposition. It is just so here. False christianity can so dexterously and skilfully imitate the true, that a passing glance perceives no difference; yes, a keen observer even may be deceived.

Who is so suspicious as to question the sincerity of another, and that at a time when to profess to be a christian might reasonably be taken as a convincing proof of it? Who ever guessed that among the twelve chosen disciples one was a devil? How closely we should look to the foundation, to see that we stand on safe ground; not mistaking reformed conduct for a renewed heart, some outward obedience for inward sanctification.

Consider the consequences of being deceived. What is the consternation, the heart-sinking, of a man who finds the notes which represent all that he is worth to be but forgeries, compared to his who discovers on his dying bed, or at the judgment seat, that what he called his religion has been nothing better than a spurious imitation of true godliness, a sham. And then the commonness of such deceptions ought to alarm us; we need not wonder at them, when we see the easy way in which multitudes assume to be in the faith, how contented they are with the untrimmed lamp; the sad proofs, far too strong and convincing, which they give in their lives, tempers, habits, and practices, that they are not really new creatures, while vainly imagining they are so. We do *not* wonder at the many who will

be disappointed when the fire tries their work, but we ought to fear and to examine ourselves.

Let me then press the apostle's counsel as well worth acting upon. There are two characters in particular on whom it is urgent. I will suppose some one present ready to act on this counsel, but at a loss how to do so ; who would wish to ascertain if he is in the faith, but uncertain as to the method of doing so ; who would fain know if Christ is in him, but is doubtful what are the clear evidences that He is so.

One of the most complete and satisfactory tests scripture supplies, is the denial and mortification of natural habits. "*They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.*" They are not Christ's in whom any of these affections and lusts, any one of the flesh and mind strays and governs. On this point you should anxiously examine yourself, should narrowly inspect all your habits, courses, and tempers, to ascertain whether you do not yield yourself a servant to sin in any of its shapes, do not hide some iniquity, and consciously, or unconsciously walk contrary to the guidance and authority of the spirit. The Apostle says to the christian,—in Rom. vi. 14,—"*Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*"

Another point on which you should examine yourself is, how your heart is affected towards earth and heaven ; which of the two worlds has its best affections ; in which its treasure lies. It is the character of those whose end is destruction, that "*they mind earthly things.*" The character of those who are counted worthy of life is, "*that they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,*"—they mind "*the things of the Spirit.*"—Rom. viii. 4, 5.

Seek and you will find out if the thoughts of the glory that is to be revealed amounts to something more than a faint wish, that when present pleasures must be left, you may share it. I hope you will examine yourselves to see if there is in your hearts that steady constant bent towards heaven,—that steadfast earnest eyeing of the better country, which will prove that you have set your face Zionwards, and are

journeying towards the land of which the Lord has said, "*I will give it you.*" I hope that you will examine yourselves with respect to your sense of sin, its baseness, and guilt, and loathsomeness; whether what you feel is not merely a fear of it, but a real dislike to it, from a heart broken because of the weight of sin.

Again: Have you peace in your soul? Because if your religion does not bring peace, there is something wrong. The gospel offers peace, promises it. It is declared that "*the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*" And if you are without it, that arises either from mixing with God's sovereign remedy for the soul's healing some ingredient of your own, from resting on something besides Christ and his finished work; or your losing peace arises from a careless walking, from not taking heed to the precepts of walking humbly.

You should examine yourself, I say, whether you get solid peace from religion—peace from that *source*; and if not, then you may depend it is for one of these two reasons that it yields none. You have not got the true balm, because your eye is fixed on something besides the Cross of Christ; or else you walk heedlessly—not with sufficient care and watchfulness—and thus you grieve the Spirit, and he hides his face.

Let me mention one thing more. It is of importance that you should ascertain whether yours is only a fair-weather religion, or indeed one that will stand shoals and storms. You once knew, perhaps, the great power of easily besetting sins; you used to bend readily before temptation; you were the willing slave of sin. How is it now? Now, when you are in a great measure a changed man; now that you have taken up religion, have had some serious thoughts of the future judgment, and would do something to make ready for that day. How is it *now*, when the tempter lays one of his old baits, one of the most *successful attractions* before you; when he stirs up the smouldering flame in your heart?

Let the result of that hour of temptation be the test of your christianity. Can you now meet the

tempter and conquer, when you used to be led by him? Judge not too hastily in favour of yourself as firm in the faith; days and weeks may often pass when we are unharrassed, and when corruptions lie slumbering, and you are ready to imagine that they are slain and dead. But consider what is the issue of these critical times, when the evil one, always on the watch, comes down, and a mighty conflict begins between an old corruption re-asserting its power, and an enlightened conscience that protests loudly against your gratifying it. As you come out, either victorious or vanquished, you may judge.

On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to suppose that some here do not mean to institute any such search,—they are unpersuaded yet of its being desirable and needful; and yet God says: “*Examine yourselves.*” You should recollect that the refusal tells directly against you. If you thought the state of your heart could bear inspection, or you were really anxious to be right, you would not hesitate to appeal to the great searcher,—“*Search me, O God, and try my heart.*” When you shrink from sitting in judgment on yourself, and will not apply the tests, it shews, that you are afraid of what might be disclosed. It might appear that the house was not set in order, that there was a strange and unseemly confusion there. Your excuse for neglecting it may be that your course of life is so harmless and regular, your religious observances are so punctual and devout,—there is no occasion to examine yourselves. The fact is then, as clear as the day, that you are all wrong. Will you let your spirit and conduct be put to such tests as these?—“*They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.*” “*He that is born of God overcometh the world.*” “*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*” And if you decline these, and fall back on the old refuge, on what a broken reed are you leaning!—how fatally you deceive yourself!

If, on the other hand, far from feeling so secure, it is the soul’s consciously neglecting to exercise itself unto godliness, which keeps you from following this counsel; think how irrational such conduct is. “*Know ye*

not yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?” Are you a christian, and yet cannot give a reason why you reckon yourself so ? Still a stranger to yourself ; professing to believe such great things as christianity teaches, such practical duties ;—yourself an undone, helpless sinner ;—a free salvation offered ;—your life ever speeding itself onwards to judgment ; and yet you live as if none of these things were true. How irrational for such a one not to care to know, or not to like to tell himself, what the frame of his spirit is as to eternity ;—how his heart is affected towards godliness ;—what he knows of Him from whom he expects salvation ;—to be satisfied with the mere name of religion, quite indifferent whether you are any the better for it. When the narrow way is so difficult to find, so easily mistaken, how infatuated to wait till the flames burst on your view, put the matter out of doubt, and indicate too clearly the downward path you are treading.—When you are to be examined, put to the proof and weighed by God, to refuse to examine yourself with such help as scripture gives, what madness is this ! You cannot urge the impossibility of the thing. You *can* examine whatever you see deeply to affect your temporal interests ;—and what you can do in other matters, you can do in this. Force your spirit, then, to give an account of itself. As an act of justice to your immortal spirit, as the most essential service you can render your souls—*“Examine yourselves.”*—The truth, as told us from on high, is—*“If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.”*

St. James', Ryde, January, 1852.

St. Jude's, Glasgow, October, 1851.

Beaminster, June, 1852.

St. John's, Lynn, July, 1852.

SERMON XIII.

Heb. xi. 8—"By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

THE Apostle has grouped in this chapter the most illustrious examples of faith which the world affords. He wants to shew the Hebrews its power, and value, and great reward. So, after defining it in ver. 1, as that which substantiates,—that which proves the existence of things not seen,—he says no more what faith *is*,—but describes, in a series of instances, what faith *does*. He can thus best shew the possibility of faith, in spite of the difficulties in the way of its exercise. By embodying it before our eyes,—making us see how it worked, and what it effected in those ancient saints, he can best stimulate christians to practice it. Out of the bright assemblage here collected, we may select any likely to shed light most directly upon our path. The history of Abraham brought before us in this morning's lesson, suggests his example as suitable to our present consideration. You have heard from the 12th of Genesis the story of his call, and his departure in obedience to it. To this earliest part of his history, the Apostle refers in the text, ver. 8. Two points here present themselves to our notice.

First. The call given on the part of God.

Secondly. The obedience to it on the part of Abraham.

Mark, in the first place, with regard to the call, two remarkable features in it, that soon strike our attention. The one is, the sovereignty it displayed; the other, the power which accompanied it. In Abraham's call we see an exercise of the sovereignty of God. God's sovereignty is his absolute right and prerogative to do what he will with his creatures: to dispose of them as he thinks fit. He has a right of dominion over them which none can dispute and interfere with; he has an authority to direct, control, and determine *all for them, which he actually does*, "according to the

counsel of his own will." Observe an example of this prerogative in the instance before us.

Who is this Abraham, to whom God has appeared, and promised so large, so inestimable a blessing? What is he, and what has he done, that he should be the object of divine regard? Why is he picked out before others, to be the Father of the Faithful? He is an obscure individual, living in Chaldea. When the God of glory appeared, he was like his father, brothers, and countrymen, an idolater, serving other gods. In the times in which he lived, the worship of the true God had almost ceased in the earth. There was Melchisedek, in Canaan; perhaps Job, in Arabia: and a few others scattered here and there, who withstood the flood of error and wickedness, and remained true to the Most High; but the greater part had become apostate. The prevailing worship now was idolatrous; false religion had overspread the earth. It is to one of these heathens, living among his own people, familiar with their superstitions, and doubtless sharing in them, to whom God, after a long silence, appears and speaks.

In this we see very conspicuously the *sovereignty of grace*. Abraham is expecting no such interview,—he has no title to expect it,—nothing warrants him to think himself a favourite with heaven,—that *he* should be selected to fill a prominent and honourable place in the world's history. There is no hint—not a single intimation of any peculiar qualifications to which God had an eye in choosing Abraham;—of anything so noble or commendable in the man as attracted the Creator's notice;—that *here*, buried in Chaldea, among idolaters, was one with whom it was most fitting his great design of forming a separate people should begin. No. It is in the exercise of free, gratuitous, sovereign grace that God makes choice of Abraham. It is not Melchisedek, his faithful priest, who is selected for this high honour;—an obscure idolater is the favoured man. God is found of one who seeks him not. "*Look unto the rock,*" saith he to Israel, "*whence ye were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence ye were digged.*" Consider from what low beginnings ye took your rise;

out of what base materials ye were fashioned into my peculiar people. Abraham has no inkling of the divine purpose; never striven to attract his Maker's notice. He had no ambition to become the *Father of the Faithful*. He is living without God when God seeks him out, finds and calls him. "*Thou,*" saith Nehemiah, "*art the Lord God who didst choose Abraham.*" And why Abraham? Not because he found him a godly man, but to make him one;—not for the proofs of faith he had shewn, but to make him a pattern to them who should afterwards believe;—not because he deserved to be the ancestor of his people Israel, but because he determined, in sovereign grace, he should be so.

Also notice the sovereign authority, how peremptory the command! "*Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house.*" God speaks as one who has a right to order what he will; to control the movements of his creatures; to require unquestioning, implicit, immediate obedience. Abraham must needs comply. He may not urge his reluctance to go forth,—his unwillingness to separate from friends. He is not allowed to hint a wish to be left in peace, or decline in favour of a worthier individual, an honour involving present sacrifice. He is not his own; he has no liberty to refuse; he belongs to God, and cannot choose but obey. You remember how ill such remonstrance was taken, when Moses ventured to make it. He dreaded appearing before Pharaoh and speaking in God's name, because slow of speech. He is forgetting the sovereignty of God. "*Who made man's mouth?*" Cannot he remedy its defects? No unfitness nor unworthiness may be urged. Here, then, in Abraham, is seen one of the many footsteps of sovereignty,—one bright illustration and example of the power that resides in God to do what he will with his own. Abraham, while yet ungodly,—with no claim to the divine favour, is picked out to be blessed by God, and to be a blessing.

You will observe, next, the *power* accompanying the call. Abraham obeys at once. As soon as the command is given, the next thing we read is—Abraham

departed. Yet it is a hard trial,—a painful departure that. He must leave country and kindred,—the home where he had lived seventy-five years. Henceforth his dwelling must be amongst strangers. He must prepare for the roughness and unsettledness of a pilgrim's life. There is enough in this prospect to make him hesitate or decline, could he in any way evade the command. But a secret power is at work in his heart, which overcomes all reasonings and objections, and enables him cheerfully to relinquish all this that is required, and to enter without a murmur upon the new state of life to which he is called. The only power that can do this is divine. Not all the power in the world combined can alter the will of a single man. He may be argued with, bribed, entreated, forced to act against his will; but to *change* it,—to make him will a thing he does not,—when set in one direction, to turn it round to another, is wholly beyond human power. God does it. Yet not by mere force, by violence, wringing an unwilling consent from one who dares not resist. Without any compulsion, any threatening, he yet so powerfully acts in this case on the disposition and will of a man, hitherto *averse*, disinclined, that he will cheerfully and contentedly do his bidding. There needs no violent hands on Abraham to make him acquiesce in what God wants him to do. But there needs a mighty and irresistible power. By a quiet, gentle, yet most effectual constraint, he is brought to fall in with God's designs, and made to see that both his duty and interests require it; that after such a discovery, it is best to draw off from the world, and make things promised the object of hope.

In every case, whenever a person is brought to repent, and enquire after God, and yield to his command, it is invariably by means of this secret powerful influence. God has enlightened your understanding, changed your disposition, and thus controled your will. You have been brought to see that it will be best for you to be reconciled to God;—unnatural to live without him in the world;—that his demands upon you for obedience and service, and the love of your heart, is a most right and reasonable one. And you

are glad now, though once you were averse to it, to subject yourself to his laws, and would rather serve him than be your own master. Your expectations from the world have fallen, your expectations from God have been raised. Had these not gone with the call to Abraham, that power, by which the Father draws all his people unto him, his answer would have been as proud and presumptuous as Pharaoh's,—*"Who is the Lord that I should obey him?"*

You will see its power more distinctly by contrasting with it other means in use,—all having the same tendency and object to make men listen to God,—but none prevailing where this is wanting. With the world, in Noah's time, the Holy Spirit strove one hundred and twenty years, yet almost all resisted to the last. Among the Israelites in the wilderness, God wrought wondrously, by great deliverances—merciful providences—terrible judgments,—yet hardened they their hearts, and knew not his ways. The Jews had prophets and teachers sent to them, and at last God's own Son; yet all was in vain; they knew him not. See here, on one hand, all these means, so largely and lavishly used,—so effectual, one would think, to accomplish what was wanted,—but *all failing*, all thrown away, as good as wasted, all expended in vain.

And now see what can be done without any such apparatus—without signs—wonders—miracles, or judgments. The Son of God is walking by the sea of Galilee,—a few men are there, a little way apart, casting their nets into the sea. He, from these, selected his future followers. And how does he induce them to attend him? No reasonings are first necessary to convince them he is their expected Saviour. He makes no promises either for this world or the next, to win them over. He uses no coercion,—compelling them, by threatenings of punishment, if they failed in obedience to join him. At his magic word, "*follow me*," Andrew and Peter leave their nets—James and John forsake their father's ship—Matthew rises from the receipt of custom, throws up his lucrative employment, and henceforth they are found his devoted attendants, wheresoever he goeth. Whence the mysterious power

of that call? Nothing more simple; it was but "*follow me.*" Nothing more honest; no hopes were held out, no golden bait, no rich reward; yet how effectual. Not one hesitates, or slights the command. They are not *almost* persuaded,—will not wait for a more convenient season. No. God has spoken. There lay the power of that call. It was not man's words working on others' minds by persuasion, arguments, or entreaties; these availed little with their dark understandings. These are they "*which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"—John i. 13. "*How hast thou helped him that is without power?*"—Job. xvi. 2. It was the putting forth of a power they could not resist, because divine; a power that always does perfectly, thoroughly, and successfully what it attempts; which overcomes all repugnance, wavering, and weakness. "*The people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*" It constrains the heart willingly to accept what is offered. In a gentle, kindly, winning way, it draws the soul towards God, and inclines it to yield itself to him. Oh! if you feel the world tempting you,—if some long-indulged sin has got the upper hand, and has greater attractions than the liberty of God's service, and the rewards of faith; and you are struggling to get free; what abundant encouragement you have to pray that he would speak with the same power to your soul, that you might feel the same sweet, constraining influence that made Abraham, when he heard the call, rise, throw off all entanglements, and obey.

We come now to consider, *in the second place*, more particularly his obedience to the call, or rather, the principle from which obedience proceeded, by which he was animated, and sustained through many trials, and enabled to persevere unto the end. He obeyed God's call, peremptory as it was, and involving, as it did, painful sacrifices, and much discomfort; because he firmly and unhesitatingly believed with all his heart, that what God commanded, must needs be done,—what he promised would be surely performed. In each of the examples Paul has collected in this chapter, to illustrate what faith does, some particular, special working

of it is exhibited. Noah illustrates the *precautions* of faith; as moved with fear, he prepared an ark for the saving of his household. Abraham, in that part of his history before us, shews the *venture* of faith. The evidence of his having faith, was the venture he ran on the credit of God's faithfulness. *This* proved the strength of his faith,—that he judged it his duty, in obedience to the call, to leave his country, and go forth to dwell in a strange land, entirely in dependence upon what God had said. Many objections would present themselves—*anxious questionings* would rise to his lips—*misgivings* agitate his heart; but here, before him, was the simple testimony—the command—“*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred,*”—and the promise followed—“*and I will bless thee.*” This is enough for Abraham; he puts it against all he feels or fears; he takes God's word; recognises God's right to order him. He is sure God *can* bless, and God has said he *will*.

Strong in this faith, he meets the difficulties and trials of his new situation. First of all, he knows not whither he is going—neither the way, nor destination. Nor does he ask to be informed,—he leaves that to God. There is the leaving of relations and kindred, probably for ever. His father and nephew go, but the former dies on the road. Many ties are rent,—a sad farewell he has to bid to home. Next, when he reaches Canaan, the land is only shewn—not given,—the promise not yet fulfilled,—he is not put in possession of a single foot,—he gets the promise for his seed, nothing for himself,—he must wander up and down, pitching his tent as God directs. More than this, his neighbours are no better than those he left. They, too, are idolaters. He finds no congenial companions amongst them; and presently, as we read, a famine comes, and he is starved out of the land. Put all this together, and say, must not the man have had great faith not to lose heart and go back? Surely there would have been no obedience if there had been no faith—his heart would soon have failed. He might have been ready to go at first; but these after discoveries would have been too much, had not his firm reli-

ance on God's promise made him to feel that he might safely venture all on his word.

This man's faith is set before us as a pattern for ours. Abraham is not justified and saved by one kind of faith, and we by another. We all have occasion for faith of this quality, though it may never be so severely tested. It is the venturous quality of faith we must notice and imitate in Abraham. The first and greatest venture we are called to make in the exercise of faith, is to cast our souls wholly on the personal merits of Christ for acceptance. The mere believing there *is* a fountain in which I may wash, is not enough; I must *plunge* into it. The firm conviction that there *is* a Saviour, is nothing, unless I have actually fled to him for salvation. Like Abraham, a man must become a fool, that he may be wise; he must forsake his natural confidences, his treasured resources, all he seemed to have to mark him out as a fit subject for pardon, and be content to risk his acceptance,—to venture his all for eternity on the merits of the Son of God. If those merits should happen to be not enough—if something should be required in me as well, my cause is utterly lost, my salvation is shipwrecked.

Thus, in the outset of believing, in becoming a believer, a venture is demanded. You go for pardon, not merely with an offer—a promise in hand; but you must venture on Christ as the one means of coming to the Father—rely on him to procure your entrance into the Holiest, and a hearing at the mercy seat. Nor is this the only venture required of your faith,—all God's promises and precepts demand it. "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.*" "*Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*" That is not faith which makes no venture, risks nothing in the confidence that God will make it good,—that is not faith. It wants an essential quality, which does not lead us to take these things upon trust, and to walk in the path thus marked out, as sure to find the inheritance promised at the end of it. If I can truthfully say—I have given up the pleasures of sin, because I have an eye to the recompense

of reward—renounced the covetous desires of this world which I once had—my restless thirst for gain—and am beginning now to set my affections on things above—getting the better of that sinful habit which so long beset me—because I am convinced that “*the wages of sin is death* ;” that I desire holiness, because I believe that without it I shall never see the Lord,—then you say something to the purpose. If you can say I am ready in God’s strength to go farther still, and give up all, if he see fit to ask or to take it, you speak like a christian. Say this, heartily, and your faith stands out palpable and true,—a real, living, influential, saving principle.

He who makes no venture upon the credit of what he reads in the Bible about the future,—who, like Esau, thinks a present gratification of greater worth than a distant birthright,—has no grasp on anything not earthly, and no hope of things not seen ;—he who does not depend enough on the report of the gospel to make him seek them first, and not damage them, whatever profit may accrue,—there is no faith in that soul. There is nothing, then, ventured—nothing undertaken on the credit of God’s faithfulness and suffering. Consider this, also, it is your fault if you have not faith. Faith is required of you. It is the duty of every sinner to believe in God and in Christ. “*Have faith in God.*” “*Believe also in me,*” saith Christ ; John xiv. No one can, with truth, say, “*I cannot believe.*” If you cannot, it is because you will not. The things are too plainly made known, what you are to do, and what to give up ; they are too distinctly explained, to admit of excuse. The refuge is so distinctly revealed, the promises so clearly given, and so surely confirmed, that no one can safely say—“*I cannot believe all this ; it is too great a risk.*” Abraham could credit what seemed strange to him,—stranger than the glad tidings are to us. *That* is the faith God expects of you,—to take his word as true, and to trust in him, that he will bring it to pass. It is equally out of place to say “*I dare not believe.*” It is a mere pretended humility. Who says so? One bowed down by sin? Never. It is to sinners God sends his message. To Abraham the

idolater, not the righteous, he promised a blessing. Who says he dare not venture on a Saviour who came to seek after the guilty, and save the lost? There is abominable *pride* in that not daring to believe. It means, "*If worthier in myself I would; if not wanting a Saviour so much, I would seek one.*" Yes,—there is rebellion in withholding a hearty dependence, for it is a duty imposed by the most terrible penalties. "*He that believeth not shall be damned.*" He that will not venture his all on Christ, and follow him implicitly for admission into heaven, shall never reach its gates, but be thrust down to hell.

Thus we learn from Abraham an essential quality of true faith, that it is a *venturous* grace; and thus, by his faith, we may test our own. A man says he has faith, and he may *think* he has faith. Alas! how many deceive themselves in this. But whoever does not roll over the whole business of his acceptance with God, on the merits of Christ, but is suspicious of God, as if the foundation laid were not in itself strong enough, and must have some merits or doings of his own,—does not so implicitly trust his truth as to seek heaven, in the exact path pointed out by God—No. He is one who will have pardon and heaven in an easier way—one less strait—less narrow—more frequented than the true one. He has not the faith of Abraham, nor that by which the children of God are distinguished from the children of the world. "*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*"

Lyndhurst, March, 1851.

St. James', Ryde, March, 1852.

SERMON XIV.

Genesis iii. 6.—“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.”

James i. 15.—“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

WHEN relating the history of the fall, the sacred narrative describes how sin came into the world,—clearly accounts for its introduction,—and then reveals, in mysterious terms, the good brought in by God as a remedy for the terrible evil. Man is described to be in Paradise on his trial, well furnished for standing the test he is put to, before being confirmed in his happy condition. He has an enlightened understanding—a full knowledge of his duty, and full power to do it; he has well regulated affections, and all that heart can wish. The subject of his trial—the tree which stands in the midst of the garden—is a perpetual remembrancer of the terms he stands on,—showing the possibility of disobedience, though not in the least degree tempting him. It is to prove him if he will obey his maker. The matter in itself is insignificant enough, but all the more fitting as a test of obedience.

We are now to consider how Adam came to fail in his obedience,—what was the art and subtilty of the temptation by which he was beguiled to ruin; and how mercifully God dealt with him in his altered circumstances.

The *first point* of interest worthy of notice, is the rise of the dreadful sin man was guilty of. What was the *first symptom* of disaffection? How did disobedience originate? What was its source and spring? Observe the feeling which the tempter aims at producing, in the first words recorded:—“*Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*” He feigns astonishment, as if it struck him as an un-

reasonable restriction,—one he can scarcely believe imposed. To what purpose make any exception—why not eat of *every* tree?

We see with no difficulty the wound he means to inflict by this insinuation: they, for their part, have acquiesced in the arrangement—seen no hardship—discovered no cause of complaint in being thus restrained. But those words give it a new turn, and make it appear in a different light. The tempter has suggested that they are under a tyrannical, arbitrary law; he insinuates lack of kindness and liberality in God; he wishes to infuse suspicion and discontent—to break up the harmony hitherto subsisting, to sow a seed of discord which will ripen into open disobedience. And Eve, it would seem, is inclined to agree with him. It appears to strike her now, for the first time, as strange that the tree should be forbidden them. Her answer is not the prompt and decisive vindication of God's appointment we should have looked for. It does not seem to express complete satisfaction with it. Doubtless she will reply thus—"Nay, of *every* tree we may freely eat, we have full liberty to range over the garden; there is but *one* tree of which God has said—'*thou shalt not eat of it, in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*'—You look to the single restriction, and mean to insinuate that it is hard upon us to be debarred even from this. I look to the liberty of the grant, and think this one exception no unreasonable restraint." But far less warmly does she vindicate her Maker's ordinance. "*We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said*" (not *thou shalt surely die*, which is what He *did* say), but "*ye shall not eat of it lest ye die.*" The tempter seems to know well enough under what penalties they are bound not to approach that tree. And that word she uses—"lest ye die," as if there were some shade of doubt, as of an event that might ensue, yet not altogether a certain, inevitable fate; does it not encourage him to give the lie, as he promptly proceeds to do, to God,—"*Ye shall not surely die?*" Look at the offence, how trivial; the

threatened doom, how disproportioned. Recollect how high you stand in God's favour, for you this pleasant garden was prepared. His delights are with you, and if you should fail for once in obeying His behests,—should you, out of a pardonable curiosity, take of the fruit of this tree, why can you think the act will stir up such vehement displeasure? Nay, rather, as I see you are yourself already inclined to believe, “ye shall not *surely* die.”

Thus a groundwork of suspicion is laid in her breast—a new feeling has possessed her soul, of distrust in the word and goodness of God. She has drunk in the poison the tempter's words were fitted to convey, and is beginning to resent the restriction laid upon her, not to touch the forbidden tree. Why should they be so treated? she has begun to ask. A spirit of discontent is rising within her. She is fast losing sight of God's right to measure out his gifts as he pleases, and of the free welcome they have to all else the garden yields. She views it now as a needless and harsh prohibition,—why should they not have all, and thus be uncontrolled masters of themselves, as those shackled by no rules,—independent of all authority? Here, then, is the rise of the sin which followed. We are now at the tiny source of that mighty river of death and moral ruin, which rolls in so broad and vast a stream over the whole world.

The next step in the painful history, brings us in view of the sin itself; I mean as to its *nature*; not the precise *act* of disobedience, but the inward rebellion of the heart, of which the act that followed was just the outward and visible token. We now consider the lust, as St. John speaks, which conceived, and that brought forth the sin. This was the *endeavour* to be like God. The next words of the tempter suggested it,—“*God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.*” This, then, was the grand attraction in the fruit,—that it was “*a tree to be desired to make one wise,*”—their eyes should be opened—they should be as Gods, knowing good and evil. This was the lust, that when it had conceived, brought

forth sin; this was the essence of the guilt; the desire of knowledge, hitherto veiled. They knew already that evil was possible; they were warned against it; they knew that to touch the tree would be injurious; but of the actual nature of that injury—what it was in itself, they had no experience. This knowledge is now presented to them as greatly to be coveted,—and seeking to be thus wise, they became fools. Already disposed to resent the restraint upon their liberty, to neglect the positive command of God;—they are now prepared to complain—we are hindered from knowing as much as we might know. If that fruit would make us wiser, why is it forbidden?

Alas! they know not what they ask—what they are seeking in wishing to be as Gods, knowing good and evil. It is an unholy, unlawful ambition,—intruding into the province of God. This knowledge they aspire to, *they* can never have, as *God* has it. It is not merely a knowledge of what *makes the difference* between moral good and evil,—*that* they have already; but a knowledge of what moral evil actually is. It is such an acquaintance with it as to be able, as it were, to touch, and taste, and handle it, so as to know it as intimately and experimentally as they already know moral good. In this, they aim at being like God. *He* knows this evil, knows it well,—its nature, and properties, and workings. He is familiar with it, sees it, is present wherever it is, and yet continues holy. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; but never can a *creature* thus know iniquity, and be uncontaminated by the knowledge. Yet thus *wise* concerning evil, concerning sin, does man, in his presumption and ignorance, seek to become. He seeks to exchange his blissful simplicity for a wisdom that can never be his. When the Lord says—“*Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil,*”—either the words are ironical, or else they describe what he sought to become,—not what he actually attained; and they are designed to assure us that seeking to know more than it was the will of God we should know, was the essence of the first sin. That was the lust that conceived and produced this sin.

It was anything but out of wanton, purposeless mischief, that Eve took of the forbidden fruit; the impious desire of the heart directed the hand. Man, too, must needs know moral evil, dreaming of no more danger to himself in the acquaintance, than to his Maker. He aspires to be as God.

Lo! what a mighty change has come. What ruin has been already wrought, even before the overt act of disobedience has been committed. The character of God is destroyed in the eyes of his creatures; he is suspected of illiberality; his word is doubted; his creature is presumptuously ambitious of equality with him. Eve is already hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. There wants but the consummation—the crowning act. It follows. Beguiled by Satan’s subtilty—turned aside by her deceived heart, *so that she cannot say to him—It is all a lie,—“she took of the fruit and did eat.” “Lust, when it had conceived, brought forth sin.”* But the chain ends not there. *“Sin, when it was finished, brought forth death.” “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* And forthwith the sentence took effect; the curse made itself felt; as creatures possessed of spiritual life, they *died* then and there. Bodily death, indeed, was not at once experienced; nor did the second death, which is eternal, at once encompass them. Still, in complete accordance with the threatening—*“thou shalt surely die”* (more literally, as in the margin, “dying thou shalt die”), they then spiritually died: all the holy influence of the Spirit was withdrawn. They lost altogether the Spirit of God. That was the present death they felt.

And this was the heavy, and otherwise irreparable loss Christ came to make up to us,—this the forfeited blessing he was sent to restore. Man, in his fall, was brought under the curse of the law,—but *“He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”*—Gal. iii. 13. The curse that fell direct on Adam was the deprivation of the Spirit of God. This divine Spirit being withdrawn, Adam instantly became carnally minded, and to be carnally minded is death.

God forsook his temple—withdrew himself at once from man's soul,—it was no longer suitable for him to dwell there, for his holy temple is become a cage of unclean things,—God's image torn down and defaced. It has become too apparent that he is gone—*expelled* from his own chosen habitation,—his authority despised,—his goodness made of no account. It became him, therefore, to depart from man when his rule was rejected, and his benefits forgotten,—to leave him to his own rash and wilful choice. The effects of his absence made themselves felt immediately;—behold man and woman, now *God-deserted*,—they are *ashamed* of their bodily nakedness,—afraid to meet their God. This, then, was the result of the knowledge they had so coveted,—this the consequence of knowing evil; they cannot face their Maker,—there is something to conceal: and when he comes down, walking in the garden in the cool of the day, the heavy sense of guilt and fear overwhelms them, and “*they hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.*”

But whither, O man, wilt thou go from his Spirit? Even there, in that leafy hiding place, his hand findeth thee. “*Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?*” saith the Lord. Yet this is the device all mankind try to put in practice. Man's studied object has ever been, in imitation of Adam, to hide himself from God. The natural impulse of every human soul is to run away—throw up a barrier—anything or nothing,—the first that comes,—whatever will serve the purpose of keeping us from direct communication with God. Shocking as may be the fact, it is true. You dread nothing more than a personal interview with your Maker. Above all things in the universe you would avoid close and immediate dealings with him. The sense of guilt forbids that. It is not asserted that, in your own judgment, you are without excuse, and would have nothing to say for yourself, if he should insist on immediate inquiry into matters. No. You have, with Adam, your apologies to offer, such as they are. Though you cannot, when thus *taken* in the fact, deny the sin, you are ever ready, when hard pressed, to extenuate it.

But on the whole, you would much rather withdraw from God's sight and reach, and leave the matter in abeyance. You prefer leaving the great cause to stand over, and not to come at once to a settlement with your Maker, as to how you will be dealt with, and on what terms you stand.

Why is this? Because, *in the first place*, you feel no immediate want of pardon. Your convictions of sin are not deep enough to make it a thing of urgent moment that you should not be under the divine displeasure. It is no vital question, whether you are forgiven or not. You do not care to enquire minutely into it; but rather assume that in the end you will be forgiven. It is not directly necessary for your peace of mind to get as strong an assurance of forgiveness as you can; or, indeed, any assurance at all. And this operates all the more powerfully, because, *in the second place*, you have found how indistinct the recollection of sin committed, gradually becomes, as time goes by. The guilt which disturbed and shocked you considerably when you took it fresh on your conscience, some years ago, has now almost lost its sting and terror. You are reckoning that time, which sometimes smooths down human resentment, has had the same softening effect on the wrath of God. Because the impression of guilt has almost worn off your own mind, you are taking for granted that it has become as impalpable in his recollection too. It seems to you as if the distance of time at which some deliberate and wilful sin of yours was done, which has almost banished it from your *own remembrance*, must make a difference likewise in his estimate of its guilt. Vain and impious thought!

Thus, if you can only hide sin at the moment—bury yourself out of view *when* you feel most guilty and ashamed,—when the consciousness of sin is fresh and strong,—then you fancy *he* does not care to search it out *at once*. And the more time slips by, and no notice is taken of it, you begin to believe he really makes no reckoning of your mis-doings—that they become in his eyes as dim as in your own. But Adam did not so find it. Nor shall we. His device availed not long.

Among the trees of the garden, God's hand finds him, and God's voice drags him forth. He must give an account of himself. He must explain, however reluctantly, this strange conduct,—what he means by flying from the face of his Maker. Who told thee that thou wast naked? Has he eaten of the tree whereof God commanded him that he should not eat? Yes;—but it is all the woman's fault.—“*She whom thou gavest to be with me* (thus indirectly casting blame on God as his tempter), *she gave me of the tree and I did eat.*” Eve, on her part, is ready with an excuse.—“*The Serpent beguiled me and I did eat.*” They make the best, as they thought, of their desperate case,—they urge the only plea they have. And what does it avail, or amount to? How much better would it have been,—candidly to acknowledge their fault. These miserable shifts—Adam's ungenerous device for shielding himself, and Eve's evasive excuse,—did they tell with God, or make it appear that the sin was not their own deliberate choice? No. It was an aggravation of the sin.

And how much better and wiser is it for thee and me, instead of having recourse to such poor expedients as we are accustomed to—instead of urging, it was a *temptation*—a *sudden impulse*—*no great harm*—*not worse than others*,—thereby showing how little we know of *his* character, with whom we have to do, and how unwilling we are to submit ourselves to his sovereign will.—How much better to make a clean breast of it—frankly to say, I have sinned. Yes; rather to make the *worst* of it;—counting up the various aggravations of sin, and crying “*For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great,*” than to be casting about for excuses and palliations. In the certainty of being dragged forth from your hiding place,—summoned to meet God face to face,—the whole matter of what you have been doing deliberately gone into and investigated; wilt thou try and *blind* him by disguises,—try to *move* him by extenuations,—or put on the airs of injured innocence. Wilt thou wickedly insinuate that *he* hath been indirectly thy tempter,—giving thee *passions* which thou hast only gratified,—putting thee in

circumstances where the inducements to sin were so strong, and maintaining that whatever thy actual offences may be, thou hast a good heart at the bottom.

Nay—hear, first, what he has to say. Why must you needs meet him as an enemy? Why stand on the defensive, and resort to means that you think will pacify his wrath, and make him think better of you than your sins might seem to warrant? It is quite true you have offended your God,—but this is not the way to deal with him. Hiding out of sight will not for long prevent the whole case from being investigated; and when dragged forth and confronted, evading the charge, and shifting off the blame will be an unsuccessful device for escaping condemnation.

Let us see, in the instance of these first transgressors, how God is prepared to deal with all who have sinned like them. There is a sentence of dreadful judgment passed, and the threatened doom takes effect to a great and melancholy extent,—man *dies*. But he is not consumed from off the earth,—not doomed at once to the bitter pains of eternal death. He is dealt with as a criminal, but as a respited one. In toil and trouble he must wear out his life, and then return to dust. A curse alights upon the earth, and the whole creation henceforth groans and travails in pain together. Being made from this time subject to vanity, it bears perpetual testimony to what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God. But, at the same time, God opens the door of hope to those prisoners. Indirectly, indeed, and obscurely, yet sure and real as the first streak of dawning day, is the promise of mercy. This sudden apostacy of man has not taken God by surprise. The divine projects are not disappointed—the divine plans are not thwarted, as perhaps the tempter supposes. He has, indeed, marred a noble work. By his means God is driven from his temple. But he is not unprepared with a remedy by which man may be restored. There has been a lamb slain before the foundation of the world, who shall repair, and more than repair, all the mischief Satan has done. Jesus is the repairer of the breach.—“*I am come,*” said he, “*that ye might have life, the life you have forfeited and*

lost, and that ye might have it more abundantly." Who could have thought how this was to be brought to pass! how man's nature, like unproductive ground, lying under the bitter curse, and bringing forth briars and thorns, should again be the enclosed garden of God. Who could have hoped that having had his authority so rudely and recklessly cast off by man, he should ever have designed to have his delight in him again? Who could have believed that the only begotten Son of God would have consented to pay the costly price of our ransom,—undertake the management of the whole affair, and go through all the sufferings that were necessary to redeem us from the curse?

But this gracious purpose, devised before the world was made,—this specific remedy for the foreseen evil, God now reveals,—"*The seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head.*" His thoughts are not our thoughts,—they are thoughts of peace, not of evil. He still loves the world. On a new footing, therefore, is man now placed. He is fallen, his nature is totally corrupted, the imaginations of his heart are only evil, all evil continually. But he is to be spared. The earth is to continue for a fixed time under a dispensation of *forbearance*;—the final sentence of eternal death to sinners held back;—while the goodness of God shall lead men to repentance, and his Spirit shall still strive with man.

In the mean time, let us enquire what is the aspect of God towards me in particular, a sinner like Adam? Bringing me into his hiding place—compelling my attention to him—setting my iniquity before me—disposing of all my excuses, and shutting me up under sin,—how does he propose to deal with me? Be ashamed and confounded, O my soul, that thou shouldst have ever tried to hide thyself from his presence, when he was seeking thee as a lost son,—that thou shouldst have been studying to make excuses for thy guilt, when privileged to return to the Almighty for pardon. Behold him, by faith pacified towards thee; aiming only to recover thy affections, reliance, and obedience. Be reconciled to thy God. Hear his word:—"Behold my servant whom I uphold," "*the*

seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" who saith to the prisoners—"Go forth; to them that are in darkness, show yourselves." That they have been enemies shall all be forgotten in the joy of receiving them back. The Redeemer will present them holy and unblameable in his sight. "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*"

St. James's, Ryde, Jan. 1853.

SERMON XV.

1 Timothy iv. 8, 9.—"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance."

Two such "sayings" the Apostle records in this epistle, which he characterizes as "*faithful*;" and for the tidings they communicate, the good news which they contain, are "*worthy of all acceptance*." One is "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*."—1 Tim. i. 15—A saying that ought to have a sweet and welcome sound in every sinner's ear; since it is the gladdest tidings heaven could send us. The other is the "saying" of the text, in which St. Paul declares that godliness is not merely a man's duty, but his gain; not only a disposition that it is *right* we should have, but one profitable and advantageous to have.

Godliness is one principal element in religion. If we want to know what christianity consists in as a whole,—what are the things that make up true religion,—we find them set down, one after another, in St. Peter's epistle.—"*Giving all diligence*," he says, "*add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to know-*

ledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."—1 Peter i. 5, 7. He puts faith at the beginning, according to that word of St. Paul to the Hebrews,—"*He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*"—Heb. xi. 6. According to those scriptures which say—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."—Acts xvi. 31. "*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"—Rom. v. 1. This he does, because faith in Christ and his work for us gives us all the benefit of it; and we are *justified, acquitted, pardoned* freely as believers, which we could never be as *workers*; that is, if we sought justification on our own merits, for our own deservings.

Putting faith then, foremost, the Apostle directs us to fit all these things that follow, into it. For when he says "*add,*" the word he uses means, marshal them together as in a choral dance. These graces are the necessary habits of one who believes in, and looks to Christ for the pardon of sin; and among them he mentions godliness,—the only one we have at present to do with.

Godliness is, then, as we may judge from the injunction to add it, no natural endowment of ours,—no innate quality of our minds and souls. It cannot be attained without labour; no degree of proficiency in it can be reached without pains and trouble. It does not come naturally to us; it is a temper of soul,—a disposition of mind, utterly alien to us. The prevailing tendency,—the natural bias in our souls, is all the other way.

Ungodly is our natural character,—ungodliness our master sin. The Bible accuses the whole world of it, as that in which all share,—of which all are guilty. Different men have their different prevailing vices and faults,—but ungodliness is no peculiar vice; it is the stigma that attaches to the whole human race. The heavy charge lies against us, that we have forsaken God; that if he did not seek us, we should never seek him; that we naturally follow the devices and desires

of our own hearts,—content to live without him in the world. “*The fool hath said in his heart,*” (*i. e.* the man who does not know where his true happiness lies,—who does not know his best interests, and who is throwing away his life and his prospects), “*there is no God,*”—not so much meaning to say, there is none, as that he wishes there were none. He would be glad if he knew for certain that such a being did not exist, for then he would be in no terror of his anger,—he might please himself, without fear of punishment. He would be independent,—master of himself,—not interfered with.

Who is not by *nature* just such a fool? We should feel a secret gladness to learn there was no Infinite Rectitude,—no universal Being to notice and punish sin; or we should thank him if he might but be for ever absent, or silent, or invisible. Ungodliness is this unnatural dislike of our Maker,—the wretched wish to be wholly free from his authority. It is seen in the tendency which we all have to put him out of our thoughts, and to live as if we could do well enough without his care, and presence, and blessing. It is seen in the attempt we make to shake ourselves free of him,—stifling his monitor conscience within us, and refusing to let his precepts and statutes control and regulate our lives.

Godliness is of course the exact opposite. It is being *well* affected towards God. It is the exercise of a loving, grateful, dutiful disposition. It implies that there is peace, and a friendly feeling between God and a godly man; a constant intercourse,—a constant realizing his presence,—a constant hanging on him for blessing, and guidance, and strength.

Any one may, therefore, judge for himself what his condition is. If you are keeping God at a distance, or rather keeping yourself at a distance from him;—if you can get on well without him, and find happiness and satisfaction in what the world yields you;—and if the restraints of God's law irritate and vex you, and you have not the habit of recognizing him in your ways,—that is ungodliness. Such an one is an ungodly man. On the other hand, if your soul really

yearns to know and love him more;—if your answer to his invitation—“*Seek ye my face,*” is, “*Thy face, Lord, will I seek;*”—if you count his service freedom, and can, in any good and certain degree, make the Psalmist’s words your own,—“*O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee,*”—that is godliness—there is a godly man.

It is a very rare disposition. It is no common quality; because our hearts are not a favourite soil for it to take root in. This world, of which Satan is the usurping prince, is not a genial climate for it to flourish in. It lies exposed to the howling winds of temptation, which much retard its growth;—the devices of the great enemy destroy it;—storms of persecution sometimes spring up, threatening to sweep it away;—and it would never thrive, nor would there be such a thing at all, if it were not planted by the finger of God,—and carefully preserved, and watered by his care.

The Apostle stimulates Timothy to the exercise of godliness, by representing to him the advantages to be found in it.—“*Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*” See what is the gain of godliness in this world. Take just two particulars. It has, *first, the promise of continuance.* As long as you live, God will work in you, and with you,—that is ensured. Do not suppose it a small advantage to know that he, who holds your life, has thoughts of peace towards you;—that he will regulate your stay in this world by the amount of work, and the amount of training, he sees you need;—to know that there will be nothing premature or untimely,—no chance in your death. If godliness will ensure me this, is it not profitable? On what better terms,—what more satisfactory conditions, could I wish to hold my life? The ungodly say they shall die when their time comes. They are mistaken. They die *before* their time;—“*The wicked do not live out half their days.*” Even if they indeed do not shorten their life by vices and follies,—which is extremely common;—if the limits of their life are lengthened, and they go down to the grave full of years;—yet they die before their time, because they die before

they are ready for death,—before they have set their house in order,—before they have secured a treasure in heaven.

Would it not be comfortable to feel,—a most sustaining, calming thought,—that my life will last as long as it is of any service to my Lord in his kingdom on earth, till he wants me in his upper kingdom? It will last as long as it takes the Holy Ghost to train me for glory, and a blessed immortality? When God has no more to do *with* me, or *in* me, then my days on earth will end? Would I, then, wish to prolong them? All the plans of life I may entertain, ought to be subservient to those God has of his own about me; and when *his* intentions are accomplished, no matter if mine are left unfinished. I do not die before my time, however suddenly or prematurely, as it may seem, death arrives. Then the great purpose of life is answered;—the spirit has been fitted for its bright abode, and is wanted there.

Here, then, you see one of the special promises of godliness in this life. No fear of an untimely end;—no danger of being cut off, or cut down. Godliness has not the promise of *long* life, but of life enough to serve all necessary purposes. It ensures you so much as you require to prepare for heaven.

Secondly, it has the promise that your *circumstances* shall be those that are best for you. They are not all easy, peaceful, and comfortable. We are not sure of a smooth course, or a quiet path. We are not certain of health, or riches, or friends, or plenty, or freedom from the ills which befall others. We shall not be without trials. Many things the godly and ungodly share and suffer alike. In this sense "*all things come alike to all; as is the good, so is the sinner*,"—(Eccles. x. 2), that is, in what happens to them in respect to outward trials. But in another respect, they have a vastly different lot. "*All things work together for good to them that love God*,"—Rom. viii. 28. "*The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them*,"—Psalm xxxiv. 7. "*The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy*,"—Psalm xxxiii. 8. They

need "*Fear no evil.*"—Psalm xxiii. 4. "*Bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure.*"—Isa. xxxiii. 16. Your circumstances shall be the *best* for you; they shall be chosen in reference to your preparation for heaven. And this accounts for our meeting with cases where the profit, as to this life, may seem very doubtful. Take a strong instance:—there is the beggar Lazarus;—a godly man, yet a beggar. He had not a friend,—his worldly circumstances never improved. What profit was godliness to him? Doubtless, he found its immense advantages in the next life, but what gain was it in this? It was greater than a careless observer is likely to see. As to the continuance of his life,—he lived as long as it was good for him to live,—and God was with him:—and though such an obscure being, he nevertheless served an important purpose.—He lay at the gate of the rich man,—giving him an opportunity of making to himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,—of administering assistance to him as he ought. Thus, as God's instrument, he might be well content to live; for, as wretched as his outward circumstances were, still God provided for him;—he got crumbs. Yes, he enjoyed the peace of God, and knew that God cared for him. Would he not have been ten times worse without godliness? Was he not infinitely happier as a godly man, knowing that he had a divine protector;—looking for brighter days, confidently expecting, after this "*light affliction,*" "*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*"—(2 Cor. iv. 17) than if he had been a rich, reputable, discontented, blaspheming wretch,—miserable here, and with no hope hereafter? Let any one give godliness a fair trial, and he will find it "*profitable unto all things.*" Such is its great gain in this present life, "*that there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time.*"—Luke xviii. 29, 30.

But the promise reaches much farther than this;—the profit extends beyond this life;—it hath the "*promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*" What this is, what its fulfilment will be,—an

angel's tongue might tell you,—a mortal man's cannot. "*It doth not yet appear what we shall be.*"—1 John iii. 2. And most feeble and narrow must our highest conceptions ever be of its exceeding glory—its abiding joys.

But you may notice this.—If godliness has the promise of the life that is to come, then the best interests of the godly are secured. Their happiness is beyond the reach of enemies,—none can mar it, or rob them of it; their prospects are bright and cheering; they live in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, has promised to them. He would deny himself, and cast away his own image;—he would pull down his own work, if he did not give to them eternal life.—"*Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.*"—Psa. iv. 3. "*I gave unto them eternal life.*"—John vi. There will be no dispute as to the profitableness of godliness in that great day, when this promise is made good;—there will not be two opinions then. It will then be acknowledged by the whole world that the godly were the only wise,—the ungodly truly fools.

Three things are worthy of especial remembrance,—

First. Remember the nature of godliness. It is not being outwardly religious;—it does not consist merely in much praying, and reading the Bible,—and far less in merely bearing a good character,—in being respectable, honest, and harmless. It is true, no one can *want* these qualities, and *have* godliness; but he may *have* all these and still *want* godliness.

Godliness is a temper and disposition in a man that *owns* God. It makes him love and seek God for himself. It makes him draw near to him,—live close to him,—try to please him.

How shall I gain such a temper? It is not my natural feeling towards God. I may be willing to pay him some outward respect, and acknowledge his authority to some extent; still there is much strangeness towards him, and little love. I have naturally no strong desire to know him better, and please him more. How, then, shall I reach it, and what shall I do to become a godly man? By adding godliness to faith,

according to the direction.—“*Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness.*”—2 Pet. i. 5, 6. Godliness results from right views of God;—from knowing him as he is,—all glorious, and excellent, and desirable. The Devil, and our own hearts misrepresent him in every way;—as a harsh master, who rules by terror,—yet as a weak, indulgent judge, who will take any excuse, and be melted by a despairing cry for pity. Faith sees God in Christ, reconciling sinners by a method in which mercy and truth meet together, and pardon is granted, for a sufficient reason,—because the penalty is paid, and a substitute has suffered in our place. Faith sees, in Christ laying down his life, how much “*God loved the world,*” and thus comes to a right understanding about him. Approaching him on his own terms, my views and feelings are all changed,—my distrusts and suspicions are gone. It is the *grace* of God that bringeth salvation,—which effectually teaches me to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Secondly. Remember the exceeding profit of godliness. It may be told in a word. It is everlasting profit. You *must* wear some one’s yoke;—you must have some master, and yield yourself to obey *some* laws. Shall they be the laws of Christ, or of Satan? Which will be most profitable? “*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”—Rom. vi. 23.

Thirdly. Remember to exercise godliness, as the Apostle directs.—“*Exercise thyself rather unto godliness.*”—1 Tim. iv. 7. Bodily exercise profiteth for a little while,—godliness for all time. Give diligence to add it, says St. Peter,—for it needs cultivation and exercise. To the christian, even, we may say,—You thought once your heart would never grow cold towards God, but you have found it to do so;—you said you would never turn again to folly, but you have. Why was this? It was for want of diligence, through not studiously exercising yourself unto godliness;—through not practising it. There must be great pains *taken* to form godly habits;—learning to go through

ordinary duties in a godly way. For godliness does not consist in doing extraordinary things, beyond what any one else does; but in doing what our hands find to do, as unto God;—doing them with the aim of pleasing him, as duties he has set us,—as employments he has marked out for us, and which he expects us to do well. “*Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*”—1 Cor. x. 31. It consists, also, in suffering the trials which he has appointed, patiently, meekly, submissively to him, and after the example of Christ. Thus, godliness makes a life that is esteemed among men,—pleasing in the sight of God also. “*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.*”—1 Pet. ii. 21. “*It is a faithful saying. For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.*”—2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

It is this which gives life and reality to religion; and which must be nothing but a poor, dead form without it. Godliness is the image of God wrought in the soul by the Spirit;—his likeness growing and increasing in us by exercise;—and it is that which proves, unmistakeably, that we are in Christ, and that he will own us at the last day. It will stand the test of a dying hour, and bring a man peace at the last. “*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*”—1 Tim. vi. 6.

Binfield, November, 1851.

St. John's, Ryde, December, 1851.

South Lynn, July, 1852.

SERMON XVI.

2 Peter ii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.—“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an example unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with *their* unlawful deeds); the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”

WE have just heard in full (referring to the history of Lot, recorded in Genesis xiii.), the strange, sad story the Apostle refers to. Let us try to gather up some of the lessons its warnings and instructions are meant to convey to us; and may the Holy Spirit impress them on the hearts of all present.

The first subject I would remark on, is that of Lot, —the one righteous man—the single grain of wheat, in a large bundle of tares. Nevertheless, there are some things in his conduct so suspicious, that any one apt to judge hastily, to think harshly, might question if he could be called a godly man at all. Some passages in his life are so little to his credit, that we, looking at the outward appearance, might doubt if he could rightfully claim to be reckoned among the servants of God. His going to live in Sodom, for instance. What an unwise, imprudent, and unwarrantable act that was! What a thoroughly worldly motive took him there.

It was necessary he and his uncle Abraham should part company, and Abraham, with his usual disinterestedness and unselfishness, desired his nephew to choose for himself where he would like to live. He leaves it to him, saying, probably to himself, “it is but a secondary consideration:”—he is sojourning in a *strange* country. But Lot, walking by sight, looks

around him, takes careful survey of the whole country, and then pitches on the plain of Jordan for his new habitation. He will go and live there, for it is a fruitful land, well-watered everywhere, "*as the garden of the Lord.*" The character of the people who would be his neighbours and acquaintances, he either never took account of, or else considered it of little consequence, compared with the substantial advantages and comforts which their city and country afforded him.

And yet those people, the inhabitants of that plain, bore a character so notoriously bad, that a religious man, one would suppose, would forego any advantages rather than risk for himself and family the contaminating society of men so wicked and abandoned. However, it did not strike Lot so. And what surprises us still more, is, that after being taken prisoner, and losing his goods, when the mighty kings invaded Sodom,—as soon as Abraham, coming to the rescue, has restored him to liberty, he goes back, and again takes up his abode there. Neither the wickedness of the people seem to have given him a distaste for the place, nor the significant warning he thus received, that God disapproved of his living there, made him fear to return. Whatever the cause was,—whether the fruitfulness and beauty of the land had still a charm he could not resist,—or whether it was the persuasions and wishes of his wife and daughters,—we find him again in Sodom when its doomsday had arrived:—and even then lingering on its borders while angels were urging him to escape out of it for his life.

In our judgment, all this would tell strongly against any real religion in such a case now. One is ready to say, that man cannot be seeking "*first the kingdom of God;*" the world is in his heart. Neither can he find the men of Sodom, grossly and abominably wicked as they are, such very uncongenial society, when, after being thus dragged forth, he can voluntarily go and sit down in their midst again. But such judgment would be entirely mistaken and wholly unwarranted. So little capable are we of trying each other,—so open, on the one hand, to be deceived by a fair profession, *concealing an unrenewed heart*, and to overlook, on

the other, amidst unpromising appearances, the root of genuine godliness within.

Lot's character has been vindicated by one who perfectly knows the heart of man,—who corrects the harsh and hasty sentence we are ready to pronounce, by the emphatic testimony that “*that righteous man, dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds.*” For mark, though Lot lived in Sodom, he had no sympathy with its sins. That sympathy which his corrupt nature would have felt, was kept in check,—overborne by the new principle within. That was the touchstone of his integrity ;—*there* he proved himself upright. In this way he gave evidence that he was a true servant of God. He never conformed to the evil ways of the people he lived among,—never followed their evil courses,—never partook of their unlawful deeds. Although living in the midst of temptation,—standing alone, with none to keep him in countenance, none to join him in bearing testimony against their wicked works, none to encourage and strengthen him by example or exhortation,—Lot stood firm. The crying sins of Sodom, which the universal practice made fashionable, and the universal opinion tolerated, *he* never tolerated, never joined in, never even sympathised with. From day to day he was vexed. His soul was pained, tormented ;—and thus he proved his heart was right. In his spirit there was no guile.

Any man not thoroughly converted to God,—an unregenerate man, with no divine principle planted in his soul,—a man not under grace,—would never have behaved as Lot did. It may be very true that the peculiar sins of Sodom have no attractions for you,—that *your* bent is all the other way, in a different direction. It may be that the lusts of the flesh are not congenial,—your weak side is not there. Still, with a heart not visited by the renewing grace of God—in Lot's circumstances, you would not imitate his conduct. You may indeed keep aloof from the prevailing sins in common practice around you, whatever they may happen to be ; but it is not the *fear of God* that restrains you from running to the same excess of

riot. It is the fear of injuring your health, the fear of emptying your purse, or it may be the fear of the righteous retribution your conscience warns you of,—*“the wrath of God to be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”* Whatever may be the motive, it is a selfish one; it is not a rooted and settled dislike to the sins themselves. This dislike you can never have till you have seen *“the beauty of holiness.”* You may be little tempted to partake in them, or some stronger consideration may outweigh the temptation; but prior to conversion, you have nevertheless some sympathy with those sins, no matter of what sort they are. Were you in the circumstances of those who live in them, you would do the same things. You now accommodate yourself to their standard of morality;—the unlawfulness of their deeds does not disquiet you;—it has ceased to appear anything extraordinarily vile. Such things vex not your inmost soul.

Here it was that Lot, when tried, came forth as *“gold purified in the fire.”* He was a man of upright heart,—of a spirit without guile. Sin had no charms for him. Sin, as a grievous wrong done towards God, vexed his righteous soul; and on this ground, notwithstanding many unfavourable appearances, many slips in his walking, and divers defects of character, God sets his seal, and testifies to the world, that he is a righteous man.

What we ought to gather from all this, is, how highly God values sincerity,—soundness of heart; and how important it is to ascertain whether we are sincere. Lot's is not the only instance scripture gives, wherein God, looking to the heart, passes a different judgment from man, looking at appearances. Asa, one of the kings of Judah, was faulty in several points of his conduct; nevertheless, saith God, his heart was *“perfect all his days,”*—that is, it was sound. Amaziah, again, did right in the sight of the Lord; but all his good behaviour was neutralized by this damaging testimony,—he did it not with a perfect or upright heart. This you will find to be the true test of your religion being real,—of your *standing* being firm, as a servant of God;—not

the uprightness of your life merely, but the guilelessness of your heart. Lot might have dwelt in Sodom—his hands being tied from any share in their deeds, by various considerations; and yet his heart might have sympathised with their sins,—conniving at them—making light of them—finding a secret gratification in hearing of them—wishing to partake in them. Then let his conduct have been as pure and blameless as it was, it would not have saved him from perishing with those sinners.

Sin may be beaten from your outward life,—you have left off practices once indulged in,—you have clean hands;—but see to it that you have also a pure heart. The sins you dare not commit,—from which your hands are clean,—do they defile your heart? Have they retreated down into its depths, and hid themselves there? When safe from the prying eyes of men, and secure against discovery,—do you indulge in imagination, what circumstances prevent your *actually* doing? Your hands may be restrained from revenge, yet murder lodge in your heart. Your tongue may refrain from boasting, whilst your mind swells with self-conceit. Your body may be kept in chastity, while adultery is committed in your heart. “*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?*” Not he that hath clean hands only, but a pure heart.

Now let us turn to the inhabitants of these guilty cities. Several warning lessons they might give us; but we have only time to lay two before you. By turning them into ashes, the Apostle says, “*God made them ensamples unto those that after should live ungodly.*” And they are very strikingly and impressively an example of men filling up the measure of their sins.

It appears a rule in God’s government of this fallen world to allow sinners a certain fixed time, during which he will wait for them to come to repentance, and if they make good use of that time, and “*account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation,*” and bear fruit, well;—if not, after that he will cut them down. An instance of this we see in the Amorites, whom the Israelites were not to drive out till after their 430 years bondage in Egypt, and because, till

then, the iniquity of the Amorites was not full. Other instances we have in Pharoah and the Egyptians;—in the world before the flood;—all showing this, that the time God, in his forbearance, grants for repentance, is often employed in filling up the measure of sins. And when those sins have reached a certain point,—when that time has arrived,—the fixed limit approached,—God comes to take a reckoning, and suddenly sweeping away the sinners, makes short work of their destruction.

It is impossible for you to tell where this mysterious limit is fixed;—at what time of life God may break in, his patience being exhausted with your apathy and carelessness,—and when he will take summary vengeance on you as an impenitent, unrenewed sinner. There is such a thing as a man's filling up the measure of his sins; but he has no means of judging how large a measure he may be allowed to fill up. You may be able, from sacred and profane history, to point out the exact time when others seem to have filled up theirs;—after how many years of sin the vengeance came down;—how long their career of ungodliness was let run on before God cut them short;—but you cannot judge from this that God's patience will hold out as long in *your* case as in *theirs*. That he has let my neighbour live on for years in gross wickedness without punishment, is no sign that he will let *me*;—that he gave to another the longest period of human life to repent in, and forbore to cut him down till he had had the full measure of his days, is no warrant to me to reckon on the same forbearance, and to delay my repentance till I have grown old. *My* cup may not be half full when yours is beginning to run over, and the difference will be, not that my sins are so much fewer, but my cup so much larger. God sees fit to take more, and to bear more from one sinner than another. The patience and long-suffering which shuts up, in one case, at the end of a few years, and then cuts down the youth unsparingly in the midst of his thoughtless ungodliness, his crimes and iniquities,—will last out, in another case, for seventy or eighty years of an *irreligious life*;—all that time the sword of retribution

being held over the sinner's head,—waiting till every possible opportunity of return to himself had been given. No one knows when his cup is full. The men of Sodom, as they pressed round Lot's door,—how little conscious were they that their condemning sin was committed,—that with the demand to bring forth the visitors, their measure was filled up, and that the Lord's time, his set time, had at last arrived.

Thus God, in his providence, will deal with sinners. He suffers you to walk in your own ways. He lets things in you, that much need altering, remain as they are, without interfering. He seems as though he took little notice of what you were doing, as though it were to him a matter of little worth whether you feared him or not, for no visible sign of his displeasure is imprinted on you,—no judgment has fallen on your head, and yet all the time he *has* been speaking, if you only had ears to hear. Mercies and warnings have been lavished, not sparingly dealt out, only you were blinded all this time. Your cup was gradually filling, and now will hold but one drop more. It is the crisis of your existence. Your next step will be the decisive one. There is yet a little space for repentance,—yet room to turn on the edge of the precipice, and fly back from it to a deliverer, who, for one moment more, holds open his arms, and if you run into them, will shield you from the judgments which are accumulating and ready to burst and crush you. But you know nothing of all this,—are not aware that the crisis has arrived,—cannot see that the next act of sin is the last God means to bear with,—and that if you venture to do again what you have already done with impunity a thousand times,—the penalty God would not exact till *then*, he will *now* exact, to the uttermost farthing.

Just so these men of Sodom went blindly to their doom,—that night was the time of their visitation,—but they knew it not. Angels were within their walls. Who knows but their despised townsman may make interest for them, and these strange visitors,—heavenly messengers,—who have doubtless come for judgment, may become ministers of blessing? But no such thoughts are in their minds! They blindly rush to

their ruin;—baffled in their aim, they retire, and the night passes by in quietness. Sodom knows not that her cup is full,—that long-suffering patience is exhausted,—that she is now a condemned cell where the prisoners are held fast. Nothing now is between her and wrath, and the next morning's sun sees that wrath poured forth in such sudden and destructive fury, that not a vestige of the guilty cities is left! Such an overthrow as theirs,—such a fate appears the most hopeless and appalling that human beings could meet,—not an hour's warning,—no time for repentance,—no hope of heaven's hearing the despairing cry sent up for mercy,—there is no room left for us to *trust* they may have escaped, and even in the eleventh hour been received to pardon. We know they have not escaped,—we are told on divine authority that they are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:—and yet our Lord said it should be more tolerable for Sodom than for some others. What monstrous form of sin must that be which exceeds theirs in its offensiveness to God! What guilt is there that transcends theirs, deserves and receives a heavier punishment? What is there more unpardonable with God than the brutal lusts to which these men gave themselves up? A sin there is, brethren, which you and I, leading moral and respectable lives as we do, may be guilty of,—a sin that may lie at the door of those who are unstained by vice. “*Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, and they shall not receive you, nor hear your words,—it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of Judgment than for that city.*” It is the sin of rejecting Christ, of not taking advantage of the grace he offers,—“*not labouring for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life,*”—“*not seeking first the kingdom of God.*”

The men of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida had no fellowship with the sinners of Sodom; those unlawful deeds which defiled the cities of the plain, had not been done on the shores of Galilee, yet was theirs a greater guilt,—a more offensive sin,—reputable and harmless people as they were, with what deep indignation our Lord denounces them. “Woe unto

thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida." He had lived among them,—proved himself the sent of God,—yet had to complain "*Ye will not come unto me;*"—so were they in God's sight worse sinners than those of Sodom. Had *they* seen his mighty works done amongst them, they would have turned to God; but at Capernaum—he stretched out his hand in vain,—he offered his free salvation to sinners, and they would not take it. *This* is the sin for which there is no pardon; because it rejects Christ and pardon when freely offered. The slave of fleshly lusts may cast himself down before his measure of iniquity is filled up, crying out—"God be merciful to me a sinner," and even he may find mercy;—his scarlet sins becoming white as wool. Remorse and Repentance may drive him to Christ. It is *you*, who, thinking yourself whole, will not ask for the physician;—who, hearing of the pearl of great price, will not seek it;—who despise the Holy Ghost sent from heaven to change your heart;—for whom there is no mercy, just because you will not take it. *Contempt of himself* is what God can least put up with. "*He looketh upon men, and if any say—I have sinned, and perverted that which is right,—he will deliver his soul from going down into the pit.*" But to behave as if nothing were the matter with my soul,—no mortal disease there;—to make light of the bread of life, is the worst affront I can offer. He calls it "*treading under foot the Son of God.*"

Three lessons, then, we learn from this passage of the old world history,—three pictures of that long past time rise up before our eyes. See that just man unwisely and unwarily fixing his home in Sodom, yet vexing his righteous soul, from day to day, with what he sees and hears of their unrighteous deeds. Attribute *that*, that he never shared their guilt,—never learnt by long familiarity to think lightly of vice,—to his guileless heart, not naturally guileless, but being made a partaker of the divine nature, he thereby escaped pollution, and God recognized in him his own new creation, owned his servant, and "*delivered just Lot.*" For this alone can we expect him to own us. Pray and strive for a heart without guile, a heart that

will not, in any degree, harbour sin in its secret chambers,—that shall dislike and hate it. Ah! how can I feel that with a nature sympathising so strongly with sin, seemingly drawn out towards it, wherever it appears? Do I not find it written for my encouragement—*“A new heart I will give, and a new spirit will I put within you,”* and *“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.”* Let us examine closely if we are thus really *“born again.”*

Let us turn to the next picture. The sinners of Sodom filling up the measure of their sins. There, see how silently and imperceptibly divine patience is exhausted,—how suddenly judgment follows when the cup is full,—what short work God at last makes of punishment when he does arise. *“Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrrha brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.”*

The last picture shews some more severely condemned, more heavily punished than others;—and who are they? The men of Capernaum,—the people living in the light,—in whose ears the gospel was preached,—upon whom salvation was pressed,—who were besought to accept it,—to submit themselves to Christ, and yet they would not. Instead of this, they let the world rule in their hearts,—despised that gracious spirit who would have re-moulded and cleansed them,—waited till the season was irrecoverably gone by,—halted till there was no time to decide,—neglected till the blessing was out of their reach. Does any one here see his own likeness among them? *“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil: in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them: I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish.”*—Deut. xxx. 15, 16, 17, 18.

SERMON XVII.

Matt. xxiv. 37, 38, 39.—“But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.”

THE history of the world's first days, here referred to, may be divided into three successive eras,—each distinguished by peculiar dealings on the part of God, and by the conduct of the church and world respectively. Thus, *in the first* of these eras,—the period referred to in the beginning of Genesis, the 6th chapter,—the division between the world and the church, hitherto well defined,—becomes less marked;—the godly and the apostate seed are mixed up together,—issuing in a general corruption;—and God, for his part, is described as *repenting* that he had made man, *grieved*, and resolved to *destroy* him.

The *next period* comprises the 120 years which the long-suffering of God allotted as a time of *waiting*, to see if men would understand, and seek after God, and of a final striving with their consciences by his Spirit. Such is the line the Almighty takes up during those years,—he *strives and waits*. The *church* is seen (reduced now to a very small remnant) *walking with God*,—*preaching righteousness,—just and perfect*, in contrast to the degeneracy around,—and preparing an ark against the threatened judgment. The world, on the other hand, is utterly corrupt, and become abominable;—depravity, violence, unbelief, and indifference to divine threatenings, are its characteristics.

The *third era* is the last week before the flood,—the latter days of the old world,—which I propose to consider in detail, in reference to the conduct of *God*,—the *church*,—and the *world*, during its continuance. For long past as those days are, they will be re-produced in the latter times; and the dealings of God, *when the time arrives for a judgment*, as sudden, and

more terrible than that of the flood, are here delineated. Hence we learn what they may be expected to be. While in the character and behaviour of the church and world *then*, we find a faithful picture of what it will be in the last times.—“*As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*”

In the *first place*, then, to begin with the CHURCH. Its *character*, as developed in Noah, during 120 years, is one of bright contrast to the world;—believing unto righteousness,—the heart right with God,—bearing testimony for him,—*practising*, as well as *professing* godliness. The church, during the period we have under consideration, is seen *entering the ark*. It is the last week of the 120 years. The building which has long been preparing, is finished, and stored with provisions; Noah receives his orders to go in, and with him are seen to enter pairs of each species of animals,—the timid and the savage,—those who fear man, and those whom man fears, crowd in together. In the self-same day, the whole of the inhabitants, in all their variety, are consigned to the ark, and when the cargo is thus safely housed, the Lord shut them in.

This is the special feature in the church's condition at that time, *a state of security*. It is *in the ark*. Apparently they are *prisoners*, who are voluntarily immured in this vast vessel, who, under some strange delusion as it appears,—some notion they are possessed with of danger to be apprehended, have shut themselves up in this gloomy abode,—exiled themselves from the green earth and cheerful sky, while as yet all things continue the same, with no appearance of change. *Prisoners* indeed, they are, but *prisoners of hope*. The real prisoners are outside, at large in the world, seemingly enjoying liberty, in contrast with those who are *shut in* to so narrow a prison,—yet, in reality, *shut up* without escape;—now barred within the four corners of the earth. The church is in its stronghold;—it has retreated there for shelter, and the shelter is a sure one, for it is pitched, and thus is so well covered and protected, that the flood cannot penetrate it,—the storm shall not be felt.

Just such a stronghold the church has now. Against

the destruction by which the world that then was perished, it was provided by Noah, under divine direction, for the saving of his house. Against the second destruction of the world, an ark is prepared by God himself.—“*A man is the hiding place from the wind, the covert from the tempest.*” A body was prepared for Jehovah’s fellow. God sent forth his Son,—manifested him, that all might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them. To him, accordingly, in all ages, sinners are fleeing for deliverance. He has spread the covering of his righteousness over every one drawn and united by faith to him.

Our ark, like Noah’s, is pitched within and without;—the word means *atonement*,—that which propitiates, renders merciful by covering sins. On all sides our ark is thus pitched,—“*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.*” His righteousness is unto all and upon all them that believe. Shut up in the ark, “*their life is hid with Christ in God.*” They have entered into its chambers,—God has shut them in;—its pitched doors about them having blood sprinkled on them. And there they *rest*, hidden in Christ, till the indignation be overpast. They *rest* there, for “*there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*” They are *safe*, because they are *in Christ*, and he is able to keep that which is committed to him. “*Moved with fear,*” they did not indeed prepare an ark for themselves, or build a house on the sand (the only foundation *they* could lay), that would rock and fall as soon as the wind blew;—but they repaired to one already framed, while the door was open, and they were invited to go in.

Observe, again, God can do nothing till he has thus placed his church in safety;—an ark must be got ready, and his people must be there, hidden and shut in, before he can come out of his place. “*As soon as Noah entered the ark the flood came.*” Till Lot has made good his escape to Zoar, the Lord, though in haste to make away with Sodom, can do nothing. The men who sigh and cry for the abominations of Jerusalem must be marked, before the ministers of vengeance begin

their bloody work. Before each coming indignation, God sends forth his word—"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

Who, then, are these within the stronghold,—these much cared for, much valued ones, whose security God will see to himself, that they take no harm? *First*, they are those who are not sleeping as do others,—who have fled to the refuge set before them. Moved with fear, they have taken the *precautions of faith*;—betaken themselves, while the ark stood open, to its inviting shelter;—gladly counting their gain for loss;—all loss if they win Christ, and be found in him,—not having on their own righteousness, but covered above and around, girt about with his.

Secondly. They are those who have stood on the Lord's side, well aware that no man can serve two masters;—who have not stood halting between two opinions, but have chosen the better part. They are preachers of righteousness, quite as much by the silent eloquence of their example, as by their words, showing how much they had the fear of God before their eyes, and dared not defile themselves with worldly lusts;—living in an evil world, but having not defiled their garments. They are those who were *witnesses for God*,—his messengers to the world, who were persuaded themselves of the reality of his coming, and show it by their concern for the masses who are living as if no such day were approaching;—inviting others to share with them the security of the ark, to shelter themselves under the blood of the everlasting covenant.

For these there was security when the flood came; and such shall be safe in the future day of the Lord. By such tests we may know if we are in the ark ourselves; for there is a *state of safety* which my soul enjoys when I have pressed after an interest in Christ,—when I have striven to get into the light, and at the cross thrown my sins on him to carry away. There is again a feeling of safety, which, though of the true and right kind, I may not be able to realize, in simply,

yet heartily looking at the cross as a sinner. There, indeed, I *obtain* peace with God. By that resolved act of faith, looking to him, I gain the shelter and security of the ark.

Still, while I am thus actually *in* a state of salvation, I may not enjoy the feeling of it. This, there are special rules laid down for getting. There is a specimen of these in the Epistle to the Philippians, iv. 4,—the Apostle told us what the people of God must be. Let them *rejoice* in the Lord alway. Let their moderation (self-control) be known unto all men; let them be *without carefulness*, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, making their requests known unto God; *and*, he adds, if they thus behave themselves, while they attend to these rules,—maintain this temper of joy and dependence on God, and a restraint on themselves, the *peace* of God which passeth all understanding shall keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. To *such*, God will fulfil his promise of granting *his peace*; but neglect on their part must lead to withdrawal and loss of it. The more *awake, lively, diligent, and earnest* they are, the fuller enjoyment will they have of the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

In the *second place*, let us turn from the church to the world,—see how it occupied this brief interval,—these seven days,—the last, during which the long-suffering of God is waiting. Alas! “*They are eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark* ;”—engaged, it seems, just with the ordinary and lawful occupations of life,—pursuing their usual avocations. For what, then, *are* they to be blamed and condemned? That they *knew not*, until the flood came,—implying for *one* thing, carnal *security* and indifference. They were strangers to the fear, under the influence of which, Noah entered the ark; they too, like him, were warned, and might have seen, as he did, the flood coming; but “*they knew not*.” Noah, wary and cautious, going to work so labouriously, preparing the ark, appears to them mad, a worthy object for jest and scorn. As to the ark itself, we can imagine them regarding it, first

with *surprise*, and then with *contempt*, a great monument of amazing folly, the creation of a crazed, diseased mind. And presently they look at it with indifference,—as its form grows familiar, it supplies a subject for conversation, and probably affords much jesting and amusement. Those who were actually employed in its construction, taking orders from Noah, working under his directions,—how were they affected? Did the patriarch's warnings, of which, no doubt, they heard enough, persuade any, and induce them to unite with him in casting off vain confidence, and coming themselves to God? By no means. Thus the world remains secure while its *grave* is *digging*. It cannot believe, not even at the very last, that there is any truth in Noah's reiterated prophecies of evil. Rather, as they see him *withdrawing* into the shelter, leaving with them, as his last word—“*in seven days God will bring a flood upon the earth*”—will they not be confirmed in their security?—for where is the verification of the prediction? Let Noah, if he likes, bury himself alive; they are thankful his voice is hushed, his denunciations at an end; for themselves they continue eating and drinking, to-morrow shall be as to-day, and doubtless, ere long, they expect to see the patriarch issue forth, crestfallen, as he finds his forebodings mistaken, his credulity imposed upon, his fears vain.

We know what a misplaced security that was. Let it be our *warning*. In the end it will be a characteristic of the world; no past experience of divine judgments will teach it wisdom; nothing but the sudden crash, the burst of pent-up wrath will rouse it.

But my soul, be not thou a partaker of the world's *spirit*, any more than of its *deeds*. Let thy security be in the ark Christ Jesus, with the *everlasting arms* around thee; not in any confidence that the evil day is yet far off, and thou mayest still take thine ease.

We mark further, as the natural consequence of this security, the *total unpreparedness* of the world. The flood came and took them all away, for they were unsheltered; had taken no precautions; built no ark; even when the nature of the impending destruction is *revealed*, and the purpose, at first intimated in *vague*

and general terms—"I will destroy man," declared to be that God is bringing a flood of waters upon the earth,—even then, when the catastrophe appears so clear and certain, they are unprepared. They know it not, being *willingly ignorant*; wilfully rejecting the notion that the earth, standing out of the water and in the water, with stores above and beneath, could be, or was likely to be overwhelmed.

What shall we suppose to be the *causes* of this utter unpreparedness on the part of the world? How is it that when the ark is finished, eight persons only take refuge in it? How is it there are no more, no other candidates,—none stepping forward to join,—asking to be taken in, now at the eleventh hour, convinced at last? For one thing, a *secret disbelief* that any such judgment was impending must have been very deeply rooted, and very general among them. Scoffers said "*Where is the promise of his coming? for all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world.*" They have *heard* of a threatened flood, but where are the signs of it? See how unbroken, how uninterrupted is the course of nature. For many a year Noah has been repeating the same story, and though he has finished his ark, and entered it,—what proof is there that his predictions will be verified? Thus, ever prevailed the same spirit of unbelief regarding the coming of the Lord, and of his day as a thief. There is to be a day of judgment, no doubt, they would say, but at some indefinite, very distant time, long after we are dead and buried: but as to its being in the remotest degree likely or credible that the Son of God shall be revealed before long from heaven, they do not receive that. Because all things continue the same, and no portentous signs indicate the approach of so great an event, a deep and thorough disbelief prevailed. And it now, at this day, seems to the world a visionary and fanciful thing to talk of Christ's coming as a thing to be expected, that, for ought we know, may be nigh,—that we are *sure* will come as a *snare*,—and for which, therefore, however far off in reality, it is well to be prepared.

We may suppose, a *fear* of being thought singular,

to have operated on many, as another cause of this unpreparedness. To *some*, one would think,—to a *few*, at least, that ark must have been an ominous sight. Misgivings would surely fill some hearts, that the security in which all seem wrapped may, after all, be false and perilous; and though they may have joined themselves in the senseless burst of scorn that had greeted the patriarch's undertaking,—now that they have had leisure to reflect, and seen him steadily going forward with his work, undisturbed by taunts or jests,—a feeling of fear is creeping in, and a sad sense of insecurity is taking possession of their minds. And yet they dare not utter it, cannot venture to whisper that their hearts misgive them, for fear of being thought singular. What would people say if they were to *confess* that Noah's prophecies of evil had somewhat shaken them;—if they *suggest* that the general security is hardly warranted, and their total unpreparedness for any visitation that might chance to come is at least imprudent,—“*Art thou also of Nazareth?*” Do you believe his incredible tale? Are you going to turn saint? And so, in dread of such gibes and reproaches, they are fain to stifle their fears, and wear on their faces, and shew in their conduct, the same disbelief that prevails around. Ah! what will it profit them, that the voice of warning awoke their conscience, when they dared not follow its leading? They stand aloof from the man of God, not because they, like the rest, believe him an infatuated fool, but because they are afraid of the world's contempt, and thus *halting*, they are lost.

It is not enough that your convictions point to the Lord's as the safe side, if you have not courage to act;—if you are more afraid of man than of God. The book of remembrance is kept for them that fear the Lord and think upon his name. *Such* shall be his in the day when he makes up his jewels.

Once more. We may attribute the unpreparedness of the world to a *delay* on the part of the many to seek shelter. It may be true enough, they say, that such a flood as Noah predicts may come one day, but there is no *sign* of its being immediately at hand, and the

attractions of the world are too strong, to be left so hastily, so long before there is any need to resign them. Even that last week is not to them the convenient season they are waiting for. During 120 years they have heard the same story of judgment approaching, and they see no more tokens *now* when it is at their doors, than during the whole period. Therefore, for a while longer, they put away the thought of danger—they put far off the evil day. Even Noah entering the ark does not convince them that they can delay with safety no longer.

Thus, O lingerer, dost thou still urge, even when warnings are becoming more solemn and impressive, "*yet a little more sleep and a little more slumber.*" When the people of God are taking their precautions, making good their retreat within the ark, *thou* still standest outside, wavering and undecided. It would be well, thou thinkest, to flee to the refuge, yet canst not resolve to turn away from the snares of an evil world, to choose the better part, to escape as for thy life. Who will take thy hand, and with firm commanding grasp drag thee away? Who will convince thee that thou art deceived by appearances, that the harvest is almost past, and now or never thou must be saved? "*As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man*"—just the same inducements to delay, because all things continue "*as they were,*" and the promise of His coming seems no nearer now than ever. And delay is attended with the same dreadful and ruinous results, too soon it is, men will ever say, to betake themselves to the ark, too early is the alarm sounded. Was it *too soon*, too *early*, in those days? Was Noah housed long before he needed a shelter? What may the doubt and deliberation of a moment *then* have cost some? Almost persuaded, yet lingering and looking back—meantime the door is shut—the harvest is past.

Thus in the Church of those days, we have an *example* of the people of God entering the ark, making sure of their shelter, coming under the protecting shadow of Christ. In the course of the world, we have a *warning*—How certainly fatal a careless security is!

We may see various causes of this. In some minds a *secret disbelief*; in others, a *fear of being thought singular*, compelling them to crush their convictions. In others the love of pleasure, or the dread of the labour of contending against sin, causes them to delay and hesitate. All produces the same result—unpreparedness for the coming judgment, leaving them exposed together to its certain and overwhelming fury.

And now when,—*lastly*, we look to God and His dealings, when the crisis has arrived; what a change is visible. First, *repenting and grieving, then waiting*, now shutting up His loving kindness, prepared to execute all His threatenings, and make a short work—this is His manner. Thus did He in the days of Noah, so will He do in the days when the Son of Man cometh. Longtime He pauses, as unwilling to make an end, yet changing not in any of His purposes—sparing the ungodly for a set time, and when that is come for which he had reserved them, bringing the flood upon them as He had said. There is no passion, no outburst of anger, in the vengeance of God. It is a decreed consumption, calmly and deliberately executed, when the end is come.

Whither will ye run now ye workers of iniquity? Had ye no knowledge that this was expected, this mighty overflow that so surely and relentlessly gains upon you, from which no escape appears. Those fears you thought so superstitious, those forebodings you deemed so gloomy, those *preparations* so needless, that *serious watchfulness* so distasteful and irksome, what would you say of them now? Can we picture to ourselves those coming days;—on one hand, the Church guarded and shut in, *fearing and hearkening*, in proper season, and now with no cause to fear. On the other hand, the world, but lately pitying the prisoners in the ark, scorning their precautions, continuing to live in pleasure on earth, and getting rid of God; and *now* its laughter changed into cries of dismay. *Sober now*—awake at last; but only to find themselves prisoners reserved to destruction, appointed to be slain? And God is seen fulfilling his *threatenings*, making way for indignation, bringing a flood

upon the world of the ungodly—so shall it be in the days when the Son of Man cometh.

His jewels shall be safe in his casket, his people hidden in their chambers—prisoners of *hope*, shut in only for a little season. The *world* that rejected the idea of fear, now trembling and dismayed, cut off from all help—*God* appearing in his glorious majesty to judge the world in righteousness. What desolation shall he yet again work on this earth! Yet only for a little moment, and the indignation is overpast—and while the ungodly world is swept away, for the inmates of the ark is prepared a new earth, never again to be defiled by sin, where righteousness shall dwell for ever.

St. James's, Ryde, Dec. 1852.

SERMON XVIII.

Acts xi. 21.—“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.”

THIS occurred at Antioch when the gospel was preached there. The death of Stephen at Jerusalem was followed by a general persecution of the Christian converts, which had the effect of breaking up the little band that had hitherto kept together, and of scattering them over the country. It was most ill-judged and impolitic on the part of their enemies, as it became the means of spreading far and wide, the hated faith which they were so anxious to put down. Some, passing the bounds of Judea and Samaria, travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus, and at length reached Antioch, 300 miles from Judea, confining their ministry, however, strictly and exclusively to Jews.

But at Antioch a new step was taken, a new line of things was entered on, and Grecians were addressed and instructed in Christianity with such success, that a great number believed. Antioch, the Queen of the East, the capital of the Roman provinces in Asia, far

eclipsed her other glories, and gained the loftier distinction of being the birthplace of Gentile Christendom, the place where *first* the commandment of the Lord "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" was faithfully and systematically carried out; where Christian efforts passed beyond the bounds of Israel, and recognised the right of the Gentiles to hear the word of God. It was also the place whence first the Church looked out towards the heathen world; *there* was organised the first mission to man, and thence were the two first messengers of the Cross, Barnabas and Saul, sent forth, for the *work* to which they were called, to preach Christ among the Gentiles. All we have now to notice is that which relates to the efforts and operations of those early converts to which the text alludes.

It briefly but significantly points to the *secret of their success*. As was said afterwards of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium, they *so* spake; but as accounting for this result, in proof that their words were not merely words of men, but of God; that the sufficiency was not in themselves; the hidden influence actively at work as they spoke is disclosed, "*the hand of the Lord was with them.*" Hence the impression produced, and the wonderful effects resulting, namely, "*that a great number believed.*"

The sacred historian is thus careful to trace the whole effect to the direct influence and superintendence of God. There might possibly have been some external or local advantages, but if there were, he does not mention them. It was not a peculiar pliability in the people, a readiness on their part to be persuaded, an openness to conviction, a quickness of understanding which their instructors were indebted to; it was not the special *preparedness* of Antioch for the reception of the gospel, which had led the Christian converts thither as the most promising field to labour in. The field, even if it had been like that of Achsah's, Caleb's daughter, a south land, fair and lying to the sun, with peculiar advantages of site and aspect, would still want something more to make it fruitful and productive; it must have springs of water, upper

and nether springs in heaven, to refresh and quicken it.

Nor, again, was it the eloquence of the preachers, the profound thoughts unfolded, the clear views exhibited, the fascinations of language, style, or manner, that carried away the imagination of the men of Antioch and won their hearts; these influences are not the explanation of the gospel's progress among them. It would be wrong to hold them absolutely of no value, not worth the taking into account; but it would be no less an error to consider them material, as if they were the essential elements of success. The experience of the Apostle was quite the other way. It was at Corinth, that sensual and luxurious city, that the Lord had much people. It was at Athens, the seat of refinement and learning, that few believed.

Christ crucified and risen must be proclaimed, first of all at Jerusalem, in the hearing of those who had slain him, while the recollections of that ignominious death are fresh in their minds. Let them begin anywhere else first, human wisdom would say: let the success of this new doctrine in other places convince the Jews of their mistake and sin, and win them to Christ: none are less likely to receive our reports, nowhere is the gospel so sure to be scorned and rejected as here in the head-quarters of its enemies, by the men who have crucified the Lord of Glory. Thus the Apostle might argue, while conferring with flesh and blood; but to all such reasonings the Lord's plain command is opposed, "*beginning at Jerusalem.*" So then the Evangelists at Antioch go forth and speak to the Grecians there. As to the prospects afforded, the appearances favourable or otherwise it might present—their reliance is not in any peculiar disposition of the people to listen—or any magic charm in their own voices to attract them. They rely only on a secret influence from heaven to accompany their words—the *hand of the Lord* is at the root of their success. That which they have to do in the conversion of the souls of men can be by no other agency. For says St. Paul, "*Who then is Paul and who is Apollos but ministers by whom ye believed.*"

How few the Lord himself persuaded ! The people who heard him were astonished, they wondered, but said—“*Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know.*” Thus those who heard him most, believed in him least ; and the reason was this, “*the spirit was not yet given.*” Hence, we see, for one thing, that the work of evangelizing cannot be easy if the *hand of the Lord* is indispensable for its success. How difficult must be the undertaking ! The figures by which Scripture represents it, proves it to be so indeed. Rocks are to be broken, so hard that the hammer must be wielded by more than a human hand before they break ; mountains are to be melted and levelled, crooked places to be made straight, and rough places plain. It is a *new creation* that must be effected. “*In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*” “*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,*” “*and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth ;*”—“*so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” Reason, argument, persuasion, may go some way towards convincing the understanding ; but none at all towards the subduing of pride, quenching lusts, healing inward plagues, reaching the heart. The heart yields to the Holy Ghost alone. Christ stands outside the door, and knocks in vain ; it will never open to admit him. He must open it himself, the key is in his possession ; no other hand but his can take down the bars that guard it ; the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience must be met and conquered by the Spirit of God. But though impossible to man, the difficulty of the work is no reason for our shrinking from it.

Human might and power are set aside as unsuitable and insufficient ; but though not by them, yet by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts, the building shall be erected. The temple must be built, and God will find the men and means to build it. The men are weak, they are returned captives, feeble Jews, both in the sight of men, and in their own estimation, incompetent to be entrusted with such a charge. The means are inadequate, at least to outward appearance ;

they carry not the marks of might and power about with them; they seem unsuited to encounter, and to surmount the opposition raised against them. Yet by them God builds Zion, and the work, however gradually, goes surely and steadily on, till the headstone is brought forth with shoutings of "*Grace, grace unto it!*"

We may well ask, then, in entering on or carrying forward any evangelizing work—such as we are now engaged in, in Ireland—how is this mighty agent to be secured. These missions at Antioch, how came they to have the hand *with them*? for we see clearly the supremacy of God in such a work. It is not by human *might*. We see the result wholly ascribed to his presence and superintendence, "*the hand of the Lord was with them.*" Then under what circumstances will that hand be forthcoming? When may it be looked for and reckoned on; with what spirit, with what view, with what motives and preparation, must a work of this kind be attempted, so as to ensure the accompaniment of the Lord's hand, "*for except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it.*"

Let there be first: *A decided recognition of the need of it*; as if, however fully equipped in other respects, a Church may be with useful and effective weapons, whatever amount of zeal and learning and benevolence may exist in those who enter upon an evangelizing enterprise, their great dependence is to be on the Lord's hand, and the conviction ever present that without him they can do nothing. "*If thy Presence go not with us, how can we, how dare we go?*" The word we carry and proclaim will be as cumbrous and unserviceable as Saul's armour: its qualities of a hammer and a sword cannot be proved, its innate mighty virtue not drawn out, except in thy hands, O Lord. But if thou inquirest "*Whom shall we send?*" Here are we, send us—for that *thou* art putting forth labourers into the plenteous and ripened harvest is a pledge that they shall not be sent unfurnished into it. Thou wilt put into every man's hand a weapon, mighty through thee for the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan.

It must, then, be truly and thoroughly recognised, that the strength and sufficiency for such a work lies in God's hand. It is a quickening work; a raising to life of dead souls; and that needs not merely an ordinary exercise of divine power, but the exceeding greatness of it, such as was wrought in Christ when God raised him from the dead. Ephes. i. 19. Who is sufficient for these things? Who will believe that there is a power in what he can urge and say enough to awaken the dead, to open the eyes of the blind, to turn those who sit in darkness, and love it, to light; from the power of Satan unto God? But our sufficiency is of God.

Secondly, let there be a strong faith in its forthcoming, that the hand will not be withheld.—A faith that to our zealous endeavours at planting and watering God will give the increase; because every such enterprise is in complete harmony with, and aims at fulfilling God's great design of subduing the earth to his Son. All things were made not only *by* him, but *for* him; for this God the Father sacrificed him, that he might be for salvation to the ends of the earth. For the gospel's sake—to serve its interests—to spread its knowledge—the world itself endures. With this design, then, ever in hand, ever in view, God pledges himself to carry it out to perfection. "*The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall do this.*" All the hope we can have of converting men is grounded on this pledge. We may be unskilled, unworthy, of stammering lips and slow speech, but the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform it. We are workers together with *him*. The cause lies near his heart—"Who would set the briars and thorns against him in battle? He would go through them, and burn them up together." He will not fail, nor be discouraged till he has accomplished his design. And so when we are aiming simply to be the instruments of fulfilling it; when for no party or selfish ends, and with no other object but to diffuse the truth of God, we take a work of this kind in hand, it is not merely *warrantable* but essential for success to have faith in his hand accompanying it. The strength of Israel in going up to Canaan lay in its

being of his will and appointment that they should do so: the knowledge that animated them was, that he favoured and smiled on their enterprise: "*the Lord shall fight for you; I will give you the land.*" These were their assurances. Those who doubted, who had no faith, were afraid, they dared not go.

But there were some men of another spirit. Joshua and Caleb knew what they had to trust in, and no report of giants being in the land dispirited them. "*We have heard and our fathers have told us what things thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them;*" yea, like as we have heard, *so have we seen*; God hath done great things for us also. Without such an expectation we have nothing to justify the enterprise. Whether we go to the heathen, to Jews, to Infidels, or to Roman Catholics, the inveterate prejudices, the extreme ignorance, the stupid indifference, the carnal security are enough in the way of *passive* resistance, besides the *active* opposition which is sure to be encountered, to make us ask, how are we qualified, how equipped to meet all this? Where is our strength to storm one such stronghold? Are we such Samsons that we shall be able to shake the pillars of Satan's house? But it is God's enterprise, not ours. He has engaged in it, the counsel and the work are his.

Thirdly—there must follow this faith, *diligence in the Lord's work*. The issues indeed are his, but prayer and activity are ours. The work is not to be handed over to him to bring about without agents or means, because he has engaged to take charge of it. These Christians entered on their energetic labours at Antioch, well knowing that it was by such instruments, that believers were to be added to the Church. They therefore set themselves diligently to work as soon as they arrived, in hope that the shower would come, and the sun shine and ripen the good seed which they planted.

And this diligence manifests himself in two ways: *First, in pleading for the hand of the Lord.* "*Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children,*" entreating him to "*command deliverances for Jacob;*" urging "*thy kingdom come, for thine is the*

kingdom, the power and the glory ;”—ever reminding God of his promise to his Son, ever insisting upon it. If we ever look at the deep necessity of man on one side, and the fulness of God’s promise on the other, endeavouring to act out his own injunction, “ *Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth ;*” and if we think of the readiness of God—more ready to hear than we are to pray, and wont to give more than either we desire or deserve—it will not be any doubt of his interest in such a work, and his readiness to promote it, but our own indifference to what is so near his heart, that will make us cold and remiss in our prayers.

Again: Join with this, diligence in working. Prayer leads to this, has this ever in view, is preparatory and preliminary to it. The Apostles received the gospel not as an excellent blessing for their own use only, but for general distribution to the whole family of man. “ *We declare unto you glad tidings ;*” and it was not enough for them simply to deliver their message, to make their proposals, and leave men to deal with them as they chose. Little comfort would those have had who went every where preaching the gospel, if they had not seen many believing. They worked in expectation of results ; reckoning on the *hand* to be with them, they gave themselves to the work, it found them busy and active in Christ’s service, and made their labours effectual.

Last of all, and most indispensable, it must be the preaching of the Lord Jesus which the hand will accept and bless. We have ample information as to the preaching of these early converts. They proclaimed that the Son of God had come, that his death at the hands of the Jews was the fulfilment of God’s counsel, the plan laid from the foundations of the world for redeeming us from sin and hell, that whosoever believed in him should receive forgiveness of sins, and that there is no salvation in any other. Their doctrine was the *Cross*, their subject *Christ crucified*. They proclaimed him a remedy for the sick ; pointed to him as a refuge for the guilty ; spread out his riches

as a feast to the hungry; recommended his yoke as easy to the heavy-laden; invited and besought all men to acquaint themselves with him. God owned and honoured them in preaching these things. To some they were a stumbling-block, to others foolishness, but to those that were called, Christ crucified became the power and wisdom of God. They found it the great means of conversion while preaching him. They so spake that a great multitude believed, and yet they spoke not with enticing words of man's wisdom, attracting attention by merely strange and curious things, or by the force of an artificial eloquence. "*Jesus is the Christ. He died and rose again. To you is the word of this salvation sent.*" This truth went to their hearts in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.

Here then was the secret of their success—"the hand of the Lord was with them." On that hand, not stayed or shortened, the Church must always depend; and when it recognises the need of that hand, faithfully expects its forthcoming, gives itself diligently in that faith to the Lord's work, and preaches Christ and him crucified, then in the same circumstances we may look for the same results, that again and again, from generation to generation, it shall be said of those who go forth like those at Antioch, "*the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed.*"

This was the open manifestation of that secret influence. These the results of having the hand with them—"a great number believed." Doubtless they so spake that a multitude believed; that hearty manner of speaking contributed to their success. They so spake truths that so commended themselves to the conscience; that is, with such affection, sincerity, plainness, and warmth of heart, that not merely were the ears pleased and the attention fixed, but hearts yielded and were converted. Still it was not by might or power; the hand with them alone accounts for their success. Their words were mighty *through God*; their sufficiency came from him. We are witnessing in these days results of just the same kind in Ireland. God is fulfilling still the promise that began to be

accomplished at Pentecost—" *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh before the great and notable day of the Lord come.*"

We have been hearing for some years of a movement in the Roman Catholic population in Ireland, a spirit of enquiry manifesting itself. Our Church took advantage of it to extend its missionary operations there, and to the Irish Society was added the Irish Church Missions, for the direct object of evangelizing the people. In 1849 those Missions began, and no missionary enterprise ever met with more rapid and enduring success. Schools were opened not merely with the hope of prevailing on the young to attend them, but to receive those anxious for instruction. Lectures and conversation classes were set on foot to meet and satisfy the eagerness of the Roman Catholics, to learn the way of God more perfectly. It soon became necessary to build churches for the congregations that were rapidly forming, and to ordain fresh clergy to take charge of them. It was in the west the movement was chiefly observable at first. There the Bishop of Tuam, after a searching scrutiny, became satisfied of its reality and purity, and has thrown all his energies into the cause.

To give an example. In the city of Cork, the meetings in the week (one is held every day) are attended by 600 persons, who are or were Romanists. At Down, in the diocese of Cashel, where the first convert presented himself in 1848, a thousand have followed his example since then, and these out of a population the most lawless, turbulent, and blood-thirsty that Tipperary can show. It began there not with schools, not among the young moving upwards to the parents, but with grown-up persons reading the Scriptures in Irish, and abandoning Romanism as the result of conviction.

Still, while this Irish Reformation has been so rapid and extensive in its operation, it has not been a sudden, rash, ill-considered movement, the flight of an impetuous impulse, and likely to wither and disappear when the excitement is gone. It was the whiteness of the fields for harvest that led the labourers there;

they had not so much to *create* a spirit of enquiry, as to *satisfy* and *meet* it. The converts have shown themselves able to give a reason of the hope that is in them—able to withstand the threats hurled, and not seldom carried into effect, by the dismayed and enraged priests—able to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Such things seem to call, *first*, for inquiry. They are not matters that Christians can leave alone as having no concern in them. Shall we let the Redeemer see how little we care for his kingdom by our eager interests in the ordinary news of this world, and our indifference in the advancement of his cause.

To hear of many thousands brought up in complete subjection to the priests of Rome seeking the way for themselves, and under its influence coming out of a corrupt church to worship God in spirit, and in truth;—To hear of them buying the truth, and refusing to sell it, counting all loss; suffering hunger, nakedness, and persecution, rather than part with the pearl of great price which they had found;—To hear of the *tendency* of this change that has come upon them—to make them industrious and gentle; such things are worth enquiring into, whether these reports are indeed true. And this reformation will *stand* enquiry. Enquiry has been made, and that of the most sifting nature. There have been clergy and laity there, not men prepossessed in its favour, not men who would have themselves originated such a work, not men of much sympathy with its chief agents and promoters, but men intelligent, shrewd, open to conviction, not easily imposed upon, and they have said that this reformation is a genuine and honest work.

The charges of bribery have been investigated and refuted. The Romanists have been challenged to prove one case, and after long search have given it up. It was not to be found. The means used have been open and fair, the weapon of warfare being the word of God.

And if this is the result of enquiry into its truth and nature, there is then a call, *secondly*, to recognise God's hand. Is it a few men from England going over to the aid of the Irish brethren, travelling from

place to place, distributing Bibles and tracts, has their hand and power brought these mighty things to pass? *Thou, Lord*, hast done it, thy right hand hast gotten thee the victory.

When we see such changes in men's minds, and coming to converse with them about it, we hear them speak the words of truth and soberness, we cannot but recognise in it the hand of the Lord. Surely, *that* has been with these preachers, and *that* is the secret of their success. The enemy stands doubtful, looking on, and wondering whereunto this will grow—though shrewdly thinking now that Ireland will be ours—and we are content to stake its whole success on this. If "*this counsel and this work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.*" It will be remissness on the part of *his* agents, not the assaults of its enemies, that will bring it to nought.

And *thirdly*, how should this stir up our hearts to rejoice in the work of God, and put our own hands as we can to the work. What an awakening ought to be manifest among *us* also, and what zeal to take part in a business that God himself has so evidently taken in hand—what readiness too to do something towards uprearing his spiritual house, to which he is now adding so many lively stories. But let us come, not under the impression that the Lord *needs us* to espouse his cause, and patronise his religion, as if our contributions to it were matter for self-complacency, as if doing him a favour. Oh! far be it from us, in *such* a spirit, to make our gift; but let us come to his help, consecrating ourselves to him, and bringing sacrifices and thank-offerings into his house.

Let us come as bursting out of that worldly spirit in which we are so ready to settle, which will let us dwell contentedly in ceiled houses, while the Lord's vineyard lieth waste. Let us come with *sincere interest*. "*Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*" With *glad anticipation* that a time to favour Zion has arrived, marked by God's servants taking pleasure in her stones, and favouring the dust thereof.

Let us come ourselves rejoicing in his salvation, and in his name setting up our banners. Let us come in confidence that the battle is not our's, but God's,—in the feeling that a necessity is laid upon us. Yea, woe is unto us if we come not. *“The days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reapers, and the treader of grapes, him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt, and I will bring again the captivity of my people.”*

Bath, June, 1853.

SERMON XIX.

Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2.—“Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”

THIS is the language of indignant remonstrance called forth by the hypocrisy and formalism of the Jews. We all know the exaggerated estimate they took of themselves,—how they mis-interpreted the meaning and object of their temple, and priesthood, and ordinances,—not seeing, or not choosing to see, that these were but the husk, the outer shell of the real treasure wrapped up in them. Yet their privilege was great, had they known it,—their advantage much every way, had they used it; for not only were committed to them the oracles of God for safe custody and preservation, but through them we cannot doubt the knowledge of the true God would have spread among the heathen.

Israel was set in the midst of the nations as a light in a dark place;—a blessing should have gone forth from them to all the people on the earth. It was their condemnation that they not only, on one hand, failed in discharging their mission,—not only appropriated

to their own selfish and exclusive advantage the blessings that should have been freely and liberally shared with others,—seeking to monopolize God, with all his gifts and mercies for themselves; but, on the other hand, that they mingled with the heathen, and learned their works. Instead of eliciting the testimony—*“Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people,”* they changed God’s judgments into wickedness more than the surrounding nations, and defiled his sanctuary with detestable things.

And yet, while their hearts were most estranged from God, and their relish for his pure and holy worship most completely lost, they nevertheless continued to pride themselves on their supposed nearness to him. They never doubted that they were the favorites of heaven. In rebuke, therefore, of this spirit, God puts a marked contempt on their idolised temple, and removes his glory from its courts. They were his own form of worship, they were the ordinances of his appointment, yet how resentfully he rejects and scorns them,—*“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? saith the Lord, I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.”* More than once he emphatically disallows and denies the character in which they wished to invest him as a God peculiarly theirs, whose tabernacle was exclusively among their habitations. Solomon had built him an house, and there he had put his name, and manifested his glory, but it was not for want of a temple that he came thither and deigned to dwell there. The High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity dwelleth not in temples made with hands, because none so framed can be an appropriate abode for him whose throne is the heavens and the earth his footstool. *“Where is the house that ye build unto me,”* saith God, *“and where is the place of my rest?”* He asks this, not because having set his glory above the heavens, he cannot humble himself to behold the things on earth; not as if in quest of a temple he asks it; as if he were seeking a place to put his name in. He has already found it and marked it out for himself. Elsewhere,

than in any spot they can imagine he will set it up,—*“with the man of a poor and contrite spirit there will I dwell.”* He is the true and exclusive object of divine regard,—*“to him will I look.”*

Here, then, in the *first* place, the Lord describes, with much particularity and distinctiveness, the place of his rest,—the real temple of his habitation. It is no house made with hands; it is, as his first abode on earth was—a living being, a man. Earth, from its creation, was but his footstool; his dwelling was in man's soul. It was made purposely a fit and becoming place for the Godhead to reside in. The materials of the outward frame were poor enough in themselves,—dust and clay; but man wore his Maker's image, and the spirit of God dwelt in his soul. But that temple soon fell and went to pieces; its beautiful order and symmetry were thrown into confusion. The altar of God in it was overturned; the divine light put out; its holy things were all dishonoured and destroyed. It lay a heap of ruins, invaded and overrun by impurity, disorder, and decay, justly forsaken of its former tenant, desolate and uninhabited. And then did God, instead of retiring for ever from the house whence he was so rudely expelled, devise a plan for restoring and re-building it. The polluted palace of the great king, he resolved to cleanse and make fit for his residence again. With what pains was that restoration accomplished! At what a cost was the desolation repaired,—the shattered pieces put together again,—the unsightly disfigurements removed,—the faded glory brought back! *“He gave himself for us;”*—that was the price which the renovation of God's ruined temple cost.

First. His propitiation for sins brings down God into it again, by cleansing its defilements.

Secondly. In taking the form and likeness of man, he becomes the pattern of humanity,—the living model of that perfection which men had dreamed of, and sought after, but never realized. In him the nature of the renewed temple is seen to be nothing less than a new creation; that by no working up of the raw *material* our souls and bodies could become the places of

God's rest. Not by merely smoothing and polishing, and drawing out and improving what there may chance to be in us; not merely by developing and making the most of one's faculties and affections can any kind or degree of true perfection be reached, and man become himself again; but only by pouring into his soul a new element—making him partaker of a new nature—creating him anew in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Accordingly, in the lineaments here drawn by the finger of God of the character he loves, the portrait he puts before us of an acceptable worshipper,—the several qualities in him which he defines, and which specially recommend the soul he finds them in, and which constitute its fitness for his temple, there exists something very peculiar. *They*, you will observe, are not *natural* qualities, neither dispositions that we seem to be naturally endowed with, nor of a kind that we much care to cultivate, or hold in any great repute.

We will briefly notice them in their order. *Him that is poor* is the first quality;—he who has many wants, or rather has discovered he has them, and having taken account with himself towards meeting them, and reckoned up what he can call his own, finds that it just amounts to nothing. He has no store in himself to draw on, he has thrown away his own right as worthless, stripped himself of his hopes and dependences, for he has discovered that they were ill-grounded, and would have disappointed him. All things, in short, that were once his gain, his stock in hand, his advantages and recommendations, he counts as so much loss, and now considers that he loses nothing by giving them all up. He judges wisely and well, for *his* is now the kingdom of heaven. For him, because he feels his poverty, there is health, and food, and clothing, gratuitously and liberally provided; because he is hungry, he shall be filled with good things; because he is helpless and needs all that Christ can do for him, Christ's grace, and power, and fulness shall be exerted for, and spent on him. "*The poor shall eat and be satisfied: they that seek after the Lord shall praise him; your heart shall live for ever.*"—Psa. xxii. 26.

Him that is of a contrite spirit is the second quality of a true worshipper. It is the same person; this is just another phase of his character, another quality of his soul. As poor, he feels his undone condition, his want of spiritual good, and wistfully turns his eyes to the grace of God, longing to partake of his favour, to see the light of his countenance, and to hear the voice of joy and health. But there accompanies this sense of want, a sense of *sin*; not only the consciousness of being empty and destitute, but guilty, and under just condemnation. A contrite spirit is one that is bruised, broken in pieces, as it were pounded in a mortar to powder, reduced to complete submissiveness, willing to lie at God's mercy, all arising from a sense of guilt.

The accusations of the divine law, instead of drawing forth denials or excuses, are acknowledged and justified. "*My sin,*" saith a contrite spirit, "*is ever before me.*"—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."—"Pardon mine iniquity for it is great."—"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." How far is it from such a spirit to stand up for the weakness of human nature,—to plead the strength of temptation,—to urge, in mitigation of punishment, the extreme frailty of man. How little can it comfort and stay itself with the thought that others have done worse, and that God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss.

It is the dishonour that God has received that causes its sorrow and bitterness,—the grievous wrong sin does to *his majesty*, which softens and breaks the heart. Looking on him whom it has pierced, it mourns. How acceptable is such a spirit to God. Manasseh, who has filled Jerusalem with blood, and made the people do worse than the heathen, no sooner shows a contrite spirit, and in his affliction seeks the Lord, than God is entreated of him, hears his supplication, and brings him again to Jerusalem—to his kingdom. How promptly is the divine approval made known of Josiah as he weeps and rends his clothes, in thinking of the neglect of God's law,—"*Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the*

Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, I also have heard thee," saith the Lord. And even Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness, and had done more to provoke God's anger than all before him,—he no sooner shows some slight symptom of contrition, a touch of repentance, than God acknowledges and accepts even the seeming change, and will not bring the evil on Israel in his days.

One more feature completes the portrait :—*He trembleth at my word.* It has been brought to bear on his heart like a hammer, and, wielded by the Spirit, has broken it in pieces. He stands in awe of God's word from having felt its power. He knows they are no imaginary dangers that it warns him of and bids him flee from. He is no longer the man to trifle with its precepts, or put aside its authority; what it forbids he dares not meddle with. The wilfulness of his spirit has been tamed,—the fear of God is before his eyes,—a reverence for his commandments is in his heart. This is the habitation God selects—here is where he delights to dwell. How different from the house I would have prepared for him. I would have sought after integrity, virtue, kindness, social affections,—all things that are of good report, and acceptable among men; these should have been the ornaments of the house I would have fashioned, and wherein I hoped God would dwell. This man should have been the model and example to his fellows for his purity of conduct—his high sense of honour—his conscientious discharge of every duty;—and for his religion, there, too, he should have been complete,—he should give God his due as well as man,—yielding all the homage and service that could be justly demanded of him. And could I even attain, by laborious and earnest striving, to such a height of excellence, and collect together under one roof, as it were, so many bright and precious things,—I would then feel, here is a temple worthy of the Lord,—here is a habitation where he will love to place his name. But mistaken man! he claims to choose for himself, and describes, according to his own taste and liking, the place of his rest. And how far, then, do my offerings answer his require-

ments? How far have I fitted up the temple suitably and appropriately for him? What lack I yet? Ah! there is one thing forgotten, without which he can never look to it. This man of honour is not a man of God; if he is rich in the qualities that commend him to earth, he has as yet none of those that will endear him to God.

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word."

Are these the chief ornaments of the temple? They are not only such as I would never have reckoned up as essential,—would never have insisted on as acceptable, but they are just the qualities I cannot produce. These sacrifices I cannot offer. They are the very opposite of those which I find in my character. How few wants I feel that are not earthly and bodily ones. I can be told that there is wrath to come, and judgments impending, and yet I do not tremble. Yet it is not because my heart cannot take impressions that I hear with no disquiet of retribution for sin,—and hear, unmoved, of Christ's yearning love for sinners. It is not because I have no affections to bestow on any object, that I have never given them to God. Where, then, is the fire that will penetrate and warm the cold heart,—burn up its corruptions,—purify it for God's habitation? Where is the hand that alone can wield the hammer and break this rock in pieces? For this man of my imagination, I now see, is not of divine workmanship. He might have filled a worthy place in this world, and stood high in the estimation of men, by dint of his own skill, and effort, and industry, in improving himself, or by reason of his opulence and rank; but to become a pillar in the temple of God—a stone in his spiritual house,—he must be hewn, and shaped, and polished by divine hands. Sin is all he could call his own. Grace from heaven must fit him for an habitation of God.

Briefly, in the *second* place—having seen this man's character, observe the peculiar and exclusive regard which God has to him. He makes no secret of the preference he feels for such a one beyond any house built for him, or any other place of rest,—for as to any gor-

geous temple which men might speak of, as adorned with goodly stones and gifts,—he dwelleth not in such. *“Hath not his hand made all these things?”* Solomon thinks not that even the house built by express appointment and permission can contain Him,—*“Even the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain him, how much less this house that I have builded.”* Neither are we supposing, brethren, that the restoration of this stately and beautiful sanctuary has at all made it a more acceptable habitation to him, or ensured his presence in it. We are not thinking that there is any special sanctity here, farther than as it is consecrated and set apart exclusively for holy services; we do not suppose that in any one spot more than another within its walls the glory of God is enshrined. When his eyes are open to this house, it is to search in it for the object of his delight,—the man that is poor and of a contrite spirit; for that man only can render acceptable worship; he alone can worship God in spirit and in truth. He is *poor*, and he stirs himself up to take hold of God. The language of his heart is—*“I will not let thee go except thou bless me.”* He is of a *contrite spirit*; and that is a welcome sacrifice to heaven, one that God will not despise. He *trembleth* at God’s word; and the author of the word draws nigh to him, and writes his laws on his heart. So, wherever such a one is, there is the sight which God most loves to see in our worshipping assemblies. *We* may look with just admiration at the noble proportions—the goodly form and comely order of the house of prayer; *his* eyes, accounting little of all that, run throughout its aisles in quest of a work of nobler contrivance, and more gracious materials, and in *that man* he finds a fit dwelling to enshrine himself. The place of rest he seeks is not the building that piety has consecrated to his service, but in the poor and contrite hearts that gather here to worship him.

Yet we do not judge, because this is true, that God disdaineth any earthly house that is built for him; that it can be of little or no consequence in what sort of temple he is served, and that since he looks so exclusively to the worshipper, it cannot be worth while to

bestow a thought on the place of worship. For almost every one has the feeling that there is a fitness in marking out the buildings dedicated to God's service, with a beauty and comeliness that shall be all their own. We know well enough that the real glory of this, or any other sanctuary, must be the true and spiritual worship offered in it to the Most High. We know that, should a day ever come when his pure word ceased to be preached in it, when Christ crucified was no longer evidently set forth here, when the simplicity that is in him, and the holy liberty that makes his people free, instead of being maintained, be prevented and destroyed,—from that day "*Ichabod*," the glory is departed,—must be written on the walls, although all its outward goodliness and beauty remain untouched. We are assured of this, because we know that it is by the Gospel preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,—by the Gospel "*coming not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost*," that this poverty of spirit, and brokenness of heart, and awe of God's word are alone produced; and so the Lord's courts, are furnished with such worshippers as he will look to and accept.

But then again we feel that the place where such great and solemn things are transacted, such holy rites observed,—where the incense of united prayer and praise goes up to the mercy seat,—that such a place should be made, as far as can be, to accord with the high purposes which it serves as a sanctuary. How worthily and well this house is now fitted to serve all those purposes—judge ye for yourselves. Who will not view with pleasure its fair proportions now laid open, disencumbered of all that used to hide and mar them, and rejoice to see it now arrayed throughout its whole length and breadth for the service of God,—no part any longer useless and shut out? While I do not forget that in the minds of some of you there must be fond associations connected with this chapel in its former state,—in the recollection of the ministry of that sainted man of God, who so faithfully, and distinctly, and unswervingly, for fifty years preached here the Gospel of salvation; yet I well remember, when, just eleven years

ago, another house of God in this place was restored and renovated, and we assembled, as now, to celebrate the occasion,—how readily you answered there the appeal to your bounty, and how freely and liberally you then offered your gifts for its service; so now, when it is in the same holy cause, and for the same worthy object you are appealed to again, I am encouraged by that remembrance to ask and hope for liberal things again at your hands to-day.

Preached at St. Nicholas, Lynn, 23 Feb. 1853, it is believed on the opening of the New Church.

SERMON XX.

1 John ii. 1.—“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

OUR Lord promised to bless and serve his people in two different ways, after he left the earth. In the first place, he assured them that he would be with them always,—that he would never leave them, nor forsake them;—that, till the end of the world, he would be by the side of his flock,—their divine guardian and guide;—that he would accompany them through all their pilgrimage;—that they had only to call and he would hear them. And this promise he fulfils through his Spirit.

The other promise was, that he would be their advocate in heaven, at the right hand of God. He assured them that he was entering heaven as their forerunner;—He was going there before them to make ready and prepare a place for them,—to be an advocate there for them at the Mercy Seat.—“*I go to prepare a place for you.*”—John xiv. 2.

An advocate is one who undertakes to plead the cause of an offender. When a man is tried for a crime,

his advocate defends him, pleads for him, endeavours to prove his innocence, and to bring him off unpunished. This is the office of an advocate in an earthly court. *His* business is, if possible, to disprove the prisoner's guilt, and to show him to be innocent.

But we learn from scripture that the advocate we have with the Father does not proceed in this way, in pleading our cause;—the matter is conducted quite differently in the court of heaven. And there are peculiar qualifications in him who pleads for a sinner before the Judgment Seat of God.

This text points out to us, *first*, our need of an advocate; *secondly*, how *suitable* an advocate we have in Jesus Christ; and *thirdly*, how he *conducts* his advocacy.

It shows, *first*, our need of such an advocate. I write unto you, says the Apostle, that ye *sin not*. Whoever lives in sin, willingly commits it,—refuses to leave it off, and loves the practice of it,—is no disciple of Christ's. He is *not of us*. "*By this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God.*" "*He that is born of God sinneth not;*" that is, does not wilfully, habitually, carelessly sin. "*I write unto you,*" saith the Apostle, "*that ye sin not.*" "*But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*" This he adds to prevent despair: for let us try as much as we might, not to sin, we should still be sinning, and coming short of our duty. "*In many things we offend all.*" Every day would have its sins—would need its confession; even though sin be struggled against, avoided to the utmost, and deplored. Therefore, to show how we are restored when fallen,—how received back to favour when we have forfeited it by sin,—he declares the kind and effectual provision made by our Father in heaven to meet our case.—"*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*"

But it is important that we are brought to see how indispensable such an arrangement is,—of what vital consequence it is to us that there should be this advo-

cate at the right hand of God,—a propitiation for our sins. You know well enough that every one of us must appear, sooner or later, before the Judgment Seat of Christ;—that however long a man may live without God in the world, entirely forgetful of the existence of such a Being, and as if quite independent of Him,—he and his Maker *must meet* at last.—“*For every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*”

Now, in the sight of God we are all criminals;—we have broken his laws, and punishment must follow. It may be delayed long, but the reckoning time comes at last, when the deeds done in the body must be looked into, enquired about, and a strict and minute scrutiny instituted into the obedience we have rendered,—the use we have made of advantages and opportunities,—the service we have done,—the glory we have given to God.

The man has never lived who could undergo such a scrutiny as this, and come out from it with the testimonial that he has pleased his Maker in all things, and that no fault is found in him. The investigation is so strict and searching,—the terms of obedience are so rigid,—for one sin a soul must die,—that it is quite out of the question for any one to think he can endure it. Think of this, you who are pleased with your own goodness,—reckon upon your own pleading,—and expect to be accepted and saved for your own prayers and merits. Are you prepared to prove a perfect obedience,—to deny the charge of having ever been guilty of a single sin? For you must do *this* or be lost.—“*Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*”

Now do you see that if the matter were to lie entirely between us and God our Maker;—if He sits as Judge, and you stand before him to enter into the all-important question of your guilt, or your innocence,—to have the momentous question brought to an issue,—whether you are worthy to be exalted into heaven, or only fit to be cast down into hell;—do you see that if this depends on what you can say for yourself,—on the account you can give of your life here

on earth,—that it is all up with you at once? You cannot stand the application of such a searching test as this;—“*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*” Unless you can prove yourself never to have been guilty of a single fault, and not a sinner at all, nothing but a sentence of condemnation can be passed upon you,—absolutely nothing else. Do you see this? The law once broken, listens to no excuses,—allows of no palliations,—will not brook a single breach of its precepts.—“*The soul that sinneth it shall die.*”

And thus the whole human race was hopelessly cut off from all prospect of happiness for eternity;—each human being must be sent away into darkness, with the fearful malediction—“*Depart thou cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.*” The Creator and his creature meet alone.

But hearken, we have an *Advocate*. He is *there* to plead for those who have not a word to say in their own defence;—to speak for those who stand dumb, convicted and inexcusable, obliged to put their hands upon their mouth and say, “*Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?*” This is *why* we want an advocate with the Father. There is awaiting each of us, an interview with the God who made us; how soon it may be we cannot tell, or who *next* that is here may be summoned to it, no one knows. But *this* is known about it, that it is for the purpose of giving account;—of being tried for life. This each of us knows,—that he is a sinner, and that “*the wages of sin is death.*” How comforting, then, to man, against whom the proofs of guilt are fatally distinct, when tried for life, to be told by a righteous and successful pleader,—*I* will be your advocate. How comforting, when he knows he has to render account, to be able to resort to him, this effectual pleader!

Now see, in *the second place*, how well suited is this advocate. He has an interest with the Judge, for he is his well-beloved Son,—appointed to the office he fills by the Father himself. You must take care, in *thinking of God the Father as a Judge, and of God*

the Son as an Advocate, not to look on the one as harsh and stern,—softened and pacified only by the pleadings of the other. The Father's heart towards his lost creatures is the same as the Son's. He and the Father are one. One God, with one feeling—one design towards us. God the Father *loved the world, and gave his only begotten Son*. God the Son *loved it, and gave himself*. It is by the Father's own appointment that he becomes our advocate,—it is the arrangement made in the counsels of heaven for our salvation. *We*, on the one hand, had broken the law,—turned sinners and rebels, and deserved to be punished; God, on the other hand, could not, no, he could not, set aside his holy law, with its threatening and penalty, as if too strict, and altogether unfit. Till Jesus Christ the Son stepped in between, there was nothing to shelter us from the curse of sin—no means of escaping it. The only *propitiation* that could be made,—that is, the only way by which it could be averted, and yet justice be satisfied, was the sacrifice in our stead of One, who was God and man; and this was made,—the Father gave the Son, and the Son gave himself. The Father is well pleased with the sacrifice he made, and will grant whatever the Son asks of him. He will spare the sinner, whatever be his guilt, for whom Christ pleads. He denies him nothing. There is no doubt of the success of *that* cause which Christ takes in hand to plead. He will have whatever he asks for. If he begs your life,—intercedes for you to be spared,—if you can get the patronage of his name, and the exercise of his offices on your behalf, your cause is gained. He is all powerful to secure your admission into heaven.

Do you think now you can afford to be independent of him, or to forego his patronage? Are you competent to plead your own cause;—can you show any reason why you ought by right to be saved;—can you appeal to your own goodness, and depend upon that as a sure passport to heaven?

Oh, surely you will not, in the face of that sweeping declaration, "*There is none righteous, no, not one.*" "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*"

While there exists One, whom we have as advocate, you will not think of attempting to manage your own cause,—to plead not guilty—not wholly guilty,—to argue out with God your right and worthiness to be accepted? You will surely not *refuse* the shelter that is offered, and think you can do without the powerful advocacy which is put, as I may say, at the sinner's disposal?

The advocate, then, as we have seen is all prevailing with the Judge,—the Father will grant any life he asks. "*And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always.*"—John xi. 41, 42. Yes, and besides this, he is all in our favour,—a universal friend.—"*He is a brother born for adversity.*"

Some may say, it is true there may be such an advocate; his pleading *may* be thus powerful and prevailing,—and happy those for whom he will interest himself,—whose cases he will take up. But will he plead for *me*? What must I do to gain him for my advocate? What manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation and godliness? He *will be any one's* advocate that *asks* with a desire to be heard. You have only thus to *ask*. He demands no money, no price. His services are wholly gratuitous. He takes up the cause of any one, without distinction, that heartily, importunately begs him to do so.—"*Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*"

And is it not something surprising, and yet most encouraging, to think of, that he, who met with the reception which Christ did when on earth;—who had no where to lay his head;—who, in spite of the miracles he performed, was regarded as a deceiver,—an impostor;—who ended a short life by a cruel, violent, and ignominious death;—that he has gone up to heaven,—not resenting this treatment,—not to prepare arrows to destroy,—not even to forget a world that despised and rejected him;—but to plead for its salvation,—to present the merits of his own sacrifice,—and to save his enemies from everlasting death, by the virtue of his own? It is indeed, long since the heavens received him, but he is still the same; ever in the

same mind, and animated by the same purpose as when he came into the world. He is now gathering in his people,—making effectual intercession for them.

Observe, how sure, how effectual his pleading must be! On what does he found it? For what reason does he request my sins to be pardoned, and my life to be spared? *He* is the propitiation. Because his death is *atonement enough*; because it fully satisfies justice—*my* death may be spared. It is not an advocate who cares little whether we be saved or lost, that we have with the Father. Far from it. *This*, that is of deepest concern to *you*, is so to him also. He would *like*, if I may so say, to plead your cause;—it gladdens his heart when a sinner beseeches him to undertake it. You need not stop to ask—“*Will he,*” —no doubt he will. He is all in your favour; your salvation, your pardon, is his reward; this repays him for the travail of his soul. He it was, “*who, for the joy that was set before him,*” in the salvation of the lost, “*endured the cross, despising the shame.*”

In the next and *third place*, we must see *how he conducts* his advocacy,—how he pleads. Observe his name—Jesus Christ the righteous;—that means never an advocate for *sin*, though for sinners. It means that he does not *excuse* our guilt, though he begs for *our pardon*. It means that he hates *sin*, while he intercedes for sinners. Sin pierced him on the cross; sin overwhelmed his soul in the garden of Gethsemane. He does not plead just because you have not been a great sinner; he does not offer any excuse for the transgressions you have been guilty of; he does not say that you have had strong temptations, and are therefore excusable. That is what *we* might expect; that is *our* notion of pleading with God; that is the way in which numbers think they can get off the punishment of sin, and that God will be satisfied with their excuses. If one who had tried this way of excuse, could only come back again from the other world to tell us with what success he ventured on it, how overwhelmed with care should we be! But we need no

such testimony. We know that such excuses have no weight with God.

For very different reasons does he pardon sin, and accept the sinner. It is all very well before an earthly judge to try and prove a suspected criminal innocent,—to speak to him of his character, and to defend his cause. But God knoweth the heart, that “*it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,*” and there is *no excuse for sin*. See Moses pleading for Israel after they had turned aside to idolatry, and made them a molten calf. God was highly incensed against them, and threatened to consume them; but Moses ventured to intercede for them,—and how does he defend them? Not by endeavouring to extenuate their guilt,—by trying to prove their faults trifling,—by promising that they should never be repeated;—not by apologizing for their having served idols. No. He knew that all this would have been unbecoming and in vain; he makes no secret of their aggravated iniquities, but prays unto the Lord and says—“*Oh Lord God, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin.*”

Just so does our advocate plead for us. “*He loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity.*” He will not make out a favourable case for you; he will not gloss over your faults, or make any allowance for your sin. He will avow that you are a great sinner, but he will urge that *he* is a propitiation for your sins. This is what weighs with God,—that precious blood, that pleading blood which cleanses from all sin.

In conclusion, mark the words, *we have an advocate*. Just try and realize all this. Is it a light thing to go before God? Are you and your Maker on such good terms, that you think with unconcern about your rescue—your salvation? Will the time *never come* when you will have to stand on the boundless shore of eternity;—when you will be laid on a dying bed;—when

your last look is given, your last word is spoken, your last breath is taken ;—when nothing but your lifeless body is left behind to your weeping friends, and *you* have sped far away ? Because you are not on the very verge of the boundless ocean already, will you think there is still a long time before you will be ? Because the summons has not already come, can you be sure that it is not issued ? Will you venture to say, Oh, I'll mind all this presently ?

Do not let the God of this world so blind your understanding. Before we gather here again, thousands will be gone. How *can* you tell that you may not be among the number ? “*Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.*” He is coming to be your Judge ; ask him first to be your advocate. Be persuaded to think that it is of consequence to be saved from hell, and to go to heaven. Put out of your head the imagination that you are not a great sinner, and that you do not deserve everlasting punishment. Perilous, ruinous notions are these. Do not think you will be able to excuse yourself, and that God will deal gently with you. Every soul unsheltered beneath the Saviour's wings, will feel the severity of his infinite justice. Think of the great and weighty cause you have pending. It is the momentous question whether you go to heaven or hell.

Well, it is clear thus far, that you have no claim to heaven. You have transgressed God's law, which says that you must die for it. But God himself opens a door of hope. *We have an advocate.* By the law, “*every mouth is stopped, and all the world becomes guilty before God.*” But ask him who has pleaded so successfully for sinners already,—who has now with him in heaven some that seemed incurably wicked, hopelessly careless ;—who, whenever he undertakes to defend a sinner, carries him safely and infallibly through ; urges a plea that is quite irresistible, which is never made in vain. “*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*”

—John xvii. 24. Ask and importune him to be so condescending as to take up your cause, and to make your peace with God. Tell him of how great consequence you feel it to be, and beseech him, "*by his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion,*" to plead for you. The fear is not that he will refuse to hearken to you, but that *you* refuse heartily to apply to him. The fear is not that he will *fail*, but that *you* will be so fatally secure; so blindly negligent, that you put off seeking him till he has withdrawn himself,—till the advocate himself becomes your accuser, and brings against you the damning charge, "*Ye would not come to me that ye might have life.*" Now just think of this. God does not *wish* your death, and shows, by providing an advocate, that he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner. He invites us to come to the Son as a propitiation. "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"—Matthew xi. 28.

But if you compel that advocate to say, they never *asked my intercession*,—they never *begged* it of me,—I know him not;—if you will go by yourself, and stand by yourself, and plead for yourself before an incensed Lawgiver, whom you have offended every day; there will be nothing left for you but to lie down in sorrow, to dwell with everlasting burnings. God will be justified when he judges. He will say—I made a law and ye brake it;—I provided an advocate, and ye would have none of him.

SERMON XXI.

St. Mark iii. 7, 8, 9, 10.—“ But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him; and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude lest they should throng him. For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.”

THIS, in the East, was no unusual sight—a physician of skill and experience surrounded by the sick and suffering as he passed through the country, all anxious to avail themselves of the rare opportunity of obtaining his help. The rude and imperfect style of the ordinary medical practitioners would cause such a visit to be highly prized, and the news of his arrival would soon spread far and near. *This* character, as well as that of a spiritual teacher, our Lord assumed when he began his ministry among the Jews; his grace and power were to be shown in the deliverance of men from visible and bodily evils; and the marvellous nature of his work,—the sudden cures he effected,—the power he manifested over evil spirits,—made his fame spread rapidly over the whole region. From all quarters, the roads were seen thronged with those who were bringing their complaints to a Physician, who showed himself perfect master of every disease, and who would gratuitously and speedily dispense a radical cure.

The interest to *us* in this narrative lies, *first*, in the condition of the crowd being so true a type of our own: and, *secondly*, in their conduct, when thus situated, being precisely that which *we* ought to adopt and imitate. The condition this large Galilean multitude presented to Jesus is most unhappy and pitiable;—they had plagues. It is in this particular that we resemble them; their various bodily complaints typify those *plagues* which ravage and destroy the soul. Of

these, like the others, there is a great variety, and as much difference in the form they take;—the peculiar manner in which they affect us, in their degree and intensity, as in the disorders of the body. But this peculiarity about spiritual diseases may all be traced to one source; the root of the whole evil is to be found in one spot—the plague is in the heart; that is the true seat of the inveterate and mortal disease to which all human beings are victims to this day. It is only by inspection *there* that we can discover what is really the matter, the true nature and cause of soul sickness.

It is interesting to investigate how the plague of our heart is detected and recognized. How do we arrive at the conviction that all human hearts are by nature in this corrupt and disordered state? By what signs may we judge of the nature and inveteracy of the disease? Besides the emphatic and repeated testimony of the Searcher of hearts, that "*every imagination of man's heart is only evil continually*,"—that "*they are all gone out of the way*,"—that "*they are together become unprofitable*,"—that "*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*,"—Rom. iii. 12,—there are symptoms by which the disease is wont to manifest itself; symptoms varying much in appearance and virulence, but all alike indicating deep-rooted disorder, showing it exists. Symptoms are sometimes very slight in themselves, yet have a terrible meaning. A little blood gurgling up in the mouth—what may it not indicate? what just cause for alarm may it not excite? what near and fatal danger may it not betoken?

In spiritual matters, small things may have as strong a meaning, and be equally ominous of evil; a bare glance, for example, may be the index of a lawless heart, that the divine commands cannot keep in awe. The rebellious inclination gleamed out in the look Eve cast at the forbidden fruit; and a few words, simple and insignificant in themselves, may betray the hidden and unhealed plague. It may look well for Balaam,—seemingly the sign of a faithful servant,—that he cannot go with the messengers from Balak till he hears

what the Lord will say. He must be well assured,—the seemingly good man, so punctilious is he, till he is given leave, he cannot go. But the language that seemed to show such submission to the guidings of the Lord, was prompted by a heart going after covetousness. Symptoms, then, must be taken as *significant* things. The discerning Physician, indeed, does not devote his whole attention to those he discovers in the patient, as though they were all he had to deal with. To the patient himself, ignorant perhaps of their real nature, and unconscious of the tale they are meant to tell, not suspecting the secret they divulge, they may seem to be all that is the matter. If that pain would but cease—that uneasy sensation subside,—if he could get back his appetite,—obtain rest,—he would soon be himself again. He looks no further,—goes no deeper than the symptoms that outwardly manifest themselves, and mistakes them for the disease. They are to him, not mere symptoms of what is wrong within, but the actual disorder he is suffering from, and he would be treated for them alone,—would have them grappled with, instead of the real mischief out of sight. But his physician knows better what they mean, and takes a correcter estimate. To *him* they are the signs of a hidden plague which is thus giving token of its workings and progress; he sees there is more the matter than merely that aching, lassitude, numbness, you complain of; these are his clue to discover what is the malady you are really suffering from; his observation of them tells him where is the seat, and what the nature of the complaint.

And we should judge, as *he* does, in detecting the plagues of the soul. What are those evil things which disfigure our nature,—make our conduct crooked,—those spots and defects in our character? What is the proud look,—the angry or envious emotion,—the covetous desire,—the craving for distinction,—the hurry to be rich, leading to dishonesty,—the unbridled tongue,—the ungovernable temper? Is it that one of these, the single blemish, perhaps, in my character, is indeed the sole flaw in a heart otherwise sound and healthy? If I have the misfortune to be proud or

passionate, or uncharitable, or greedy of gain, or licentious,—is that the beginning and end of all that is wrong about me? my single real fault? much mitigated in consideration that I do right in the main, have a good heart? Nay; that is taking a wretchedly superficial view of the case, and quite mistaking its real bearing;—that is looking exclusively at the symptoms, and confounding them with the disease. Go deeper, and see whence that one fault takes rise. Is not its presence, its being constantly about me, so that I am known to be subject to this infirmity, a very suspicious circumstance? If my heart is as good as I flatter myself it is,—would it bring forth habitually this corrupt fruit? You congratulate yourself that you are free from some vices others are too prone to; while *one*—a sin, or vice, or fault, entirely governs you; which you are never getting the better of. How is it that you are not free from that one too? That one sin or vice is merely your symptom of the inward plague preying on your soul. You would be greatly mistaken if you thought that, were it corrected, there would be nothing materially wrong. You would be wasting time and pains, if in an hour of serious reflection, you were only to pore over *it*, and the moral evils it had made you guilty of, that would end in your seeking merely to get *its* guilt off your conscience, and attempting a remedy for that superficial mischief alone. Rather make it a clue to guide you down into the inner chambers of your heart, where the light of Scripture will show corruption and disorder reigning throughout. “*The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it.*”—Isaiah i. 5, 6. Read the description given of man’s natural state, in heart and life, given by Paul in Rom. 1, 2, and 3 chapters. “*Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity.*”

We have no need of a multiplicity of symptoms to be convinced that we are out of health; *one* is enough to tell that; and if you have, as you think, *only one* you can fix on as the habitual blemish and defect of

your character, you must not thence conclude that you have a healthy soul,—that you cannot be sick of any desperate plague, and need no super-human remedy. But put it down to your circumstances not being such as to develope other distempers,—to your being exempted from the temptations which would, if you were subjected to them, draw others forth: treat that fault strictly as a symptom,—consider it as the index,—the visible sign of a plague deep-seated and dangerous,—of something radically wrong within;—trace it up to the source it sprung from,—enquire why it is there at all,—*suspect* it, and behold in it, not a trifling derangement,—no slight and superficial malady,—no mere skin-deep wound, but a sign of a corrupt and tainted heart, out of which are ready to come, at fit opportunity, many kindred fruits. “*Out of the heart,*” saith the Lord, “*proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,*” and such like. “*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,*”—the real seat of the mischief must lie in the heart itself,—out of sight—when this sort of fruit is borne.

But on the other hand, your symptoms may be so slight that you take no notice of them,—nothing appears to you the least of an alarming character. There may be marks of some degree of weakness and delicacy, but so trifling, apparently, that you pay no heed to them, and are taken quite by surprise when the Physician asserts, after examination, that they indicate radical unsoundness. And thus you may think that our Lord’s words find an exception in your case; out of your heart proceed, now and then, polluted streams, but your thoughts are *pure*,—your desires all innocent,—feelings all kindness and affection,—no suspicious symptoms manifest themselves, and therefore you have no plague,—little need of spiritual healing. And yet even if you could detect no *positive* symptoms of inward disorder, may there not be some *negative proofs*? If the true signs of health are not seen, might it not be reasonably surmised that there is something amiss? Grant that there proceed not indeed out of your heart, evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, and such like sins; but, you should ask, does it produce heavenly

ones; devotion to God; love to Christ; zeal in his service; spiritual affections? These streams would flow from a purified fountain; these are the fruits put forth by a good tree; these are the *genuine* signs of health of soul.

Have not the virtues of a naturally amiable disposition misled you? you thought them the sure tokens of a good and sound heart,—that you had no plague when they flourished: but in the absence of a broken spirit—of love to God—of a supreme regard to his commandments,—the Physician detects the plague lurking even in you; and then he bids you observe, in corroboration of his opinion, how unhumbled your heart is, as to the exercises of real penitence,—how little it relishes heavenly things, compared with those of earth,—how your nature's leaning is *away* from God,—how small a share Christ has in your affections and thoughts. He bids you notice how little of a pleasure, how much of a task, all your intercourse with heaven, all your prayers are,—the eagerness with which you read other books, compared to the Word of God;—the small interest you feel in things of the Kingdom of God,—how little you care to be informed,—how few inquiries you make concerning its progress and spread;—for all such things you made of no account,—have overlooked that they are symptoms of a plague even in your heart, which will prove fatal unless arrested and cured in time.

Thus in all cases the existence of a plague may be ascertained by an accurate observation of the symptoms that show themselves. Oh yes! It is a complete delusion, a fatal mistake, to talk of a good heart; and to soften down vices, and faults, and errors into pardonable weaknesses. Search creation through, and you will not find such a thing as a good heart, except where the Spirit of Christ has been making all new,—creating it afresh in the lost image of God. We set human nature too high, we think too well of it in these days. "*There is none that*" by nature, "*understandeth, there is none that,*" naturally, "*seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way.*" "*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith*

to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."—Rom. iii. 11, 12, 19. God forbid we should be prone to think evil of our fellows, personally and individually, but we *must* think ill of human nature,—we must hold it to be mortally diseased and depraved ; we must believe it oppressed with a deadly sickness,—even the being alienated from the life of God,—*separated* from him,—*unlike* him, and *opposed* to him ;—if we are to take his view,—to receive his thoughts of it, as revealed in the Bible. "*The carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*"—Rom. viii. 7. We have plagues. We are all sick and dying of a heart complaint. Happy those who are aware of it,—who know the plague of their own hearts, and are conscious that it is deep-seated, and firmly fixed.

Do not merely attack the symptoms while you leave the disease untouched, but take measures against the sin itself ; do not merely resort to the worthless remedies human wisdom and philanthropy suggest, but search among the prescriptions of One who is greater than our heart, and knoweth the means of cure.

Now to turn to the conduct of these Galileans and others with their plagues. Already many cures have been wrought by the irresistible power of the Divine Physician so signally put forth ; and his readiness to heal was so apparent, that a vast crowd from all quarters had collected, and in their eagerness and hurry pressed, or, as the word is in the margin, rushed upon him, so that Jesus desired a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. We cannot be surprised at this, rude and disrespectful thronging as it is. Too selfish are they at the time, and indifferent to all but their own necessities, to pay the proper courtesy and respect ; but then they *had plagues*, that may a little excuse their rude importunity. One has lost his eyesight, and here is a *chance* of having it restored ; another is crippled ; a third deaf ; —human and ordinary skill can do nothing for them. But Jesus of Nazareth has already performed marvellous cures, and they have no doubt he has power to

heal all manner of diseases; he has been willing, too, to dispense his cures gratuitously on all sides. It would be infatuation to miss such an opportunity,—a perfect recovery! to be made whole!—after years, perhaps, of hopeless suffering. No wonder the afflicted crowd and throng him; each is afraid lest he should not get up in time, trembling lest he should be gone; he had healed many, and could they but get near, they are certain of relief.

Transfer the seat of the plague, and the eagerness is gone. Let the distemper and danger attach to the soul, to the imperishable part of man, and the Physician need not take ship lest the clamorous crowd should press too closely. He then waits and calls in vain. Stupid and desperate insensibility! Yet on *His* part, the readiness to work a cure where the soul is the part diseased, is still greater; the pity and sympathy more intense, than when the patient presents to him only bodily disease. I have now as good ground to plead with Christ for spiritual healing, as any one of these who with hurried, anxious tones, detailed his case and complaints, and to whom Jesus said, "*Be of good cheer, I will cure thee.*" He is as *really* present among us, as when he sat among those multitudes; as easily accessible to us as to the crowds that flocked there, and he will give us a patient hearing. He conveys not himself away,—*we* have no long *journey* to make to come to him; and the cure he is ready now to administer is entirely gratuitous. Not only so: *we* have *far greater encouragement* to seek his presence,—to state our case, and detail our symptoms, than they who could only speak of bodily derangement,—of senses lost,—or limbs withered,—and a *far greater deliverance* is to be obtained.

Unchecked bodily sickness can only carry us a little sooner to the grave; but the soul's health cannot be neglected with impunity. To carry a sick disordered heart to the grave, is to perpetuate it in the next state of existence. Think of discovering the plague only when the Physician is gone, and the opportunity of cure lost for ever. Surely it would be our wisdom to search it out while Jesus is in the country,—while he

passes by. What a well directed examination that would be, the *subject* of which was *ourselves*,—the *aim* of which was to take notice of the various symptoms that might be apparent. We might discover some, perhaps, unequivocally bad ones; bad habits in thought, or tongue, or temper, or deed; and some rather of a suspicious character; not such decided tokens of plague as cannot but strike terror, yet enough to give uneasiness. For example, you may find a want of any sort of appetite or relish for religious occupations and thoughts; with an inclination to fill your whole heart from the store the world lays before it. And then it will be well to consider and treat all these dispositions, not as the actual disease we are affected by, —for that is something vastly worse,—but merely as symptoms; and to gather from them the conviction that the heart, out of which these come, must be an evil heart. Then instead of merely striving to suppress those symptoms,—merely to conquer that bad habit, or check that worldly spirit,—you would seek the thorough cleansing of the fountain that sends forth these bitter waters. Your aim would be to get the sick heart made well, the disordered soul put to rights, a new heart given you, and a new spirit put within you.

These men of Galilee, diseased in body, went to their homes completely cured: it was but a touch, or a word from Christ, and they were restored. This, however, is not exactly the method the same Physician pursues when it is the spiritually sick he takes in hand. We must not confound regeneration with sanctification. He does, doubtless, give at once forgiveness and the new heart;—as soon as a man is in Christ, he is free from “*condemnation*,” (Rom. viii. 1); and he is a new creature,—“*old things are past away, and*” radically “*all things have become new*.” But the regenerate soul cannot cast off, at once, all remains of its disease; the cure is really commenced, but not yet perfect; for the heart is still a fountain ready to send out bitter waters, a root of corruption, of which, some of the symptoms will appear. Still there *is* a radical change,—the patient feels it;—a cure is begun, and

being carried on ; he was blind, and can now see ;—he was *halt*, and can now *run* ;—he was *withered* and *fruitless*, and now brings forth fruit to the glory of God.

This Physician we are invited to consult. Who will say, I have made my own heart clean ; I need not a physician ? We want not only pardon for past sins,—not only the blood of the cross,—but something more ; that takes away *sin*, but not *disease*. For this, however, a remedy is provided in the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit. The soul put into Christ's hands, with all its plagues and wounds, he will treat tenderly, skilfully, and effectually. He will make you *see* and *feel* your plagues ; will show you that in your flesh is no good thing ; will scatter your own remedies, and apply his own. The medicine is his blood ; the balm is his grace ; the power is his Spirit which cleans the heart. The experience of his healing,—the sensations of health, are not only delightful in themselves, as making us relish the things for which we were made, and in which the real happiness of our souls consists ; but as pledges that shortly there shall be a perfect soundness,—a removal of the plague for ever. The land is not far off in which "*the inhabitants never say I am sick.*" This Physician, now standing at our door, will presently come to judge us. How could we bear to stand beneath his piercing eye, while in stern rebuke he asks, "*Was there no balm in Gilead,—was there no Physician there,—why, then, was not the health of your souls recovered ?*"

St. Jude's, Glasgow, Oct. 1852.

St. James's, Ryde, Nov. 1852.

Epsom, May, 1853.

Lyndhurst, July, 1853.

TRACTS

WRITTEN

BY THE HONOURABLE AND REVEREND

SOMERVILLE HAY, A.M.

NETHERBURY & BEAMINSTER TRACTS.

No. 1.

THE DISEASE AND CURE OF SOULS.

THE mischief sin has occasioned by its entrance into this world, is most conspicuous in its effects on the soul. To the body it has been the cause of pain, disorder, and decay: to the earth it has brought desolation and barrenness: God has cursed it for sin's sake. But these are not its worst effects. It has corrupted and destroyed that which cannot decay like the body, or dissolve like the earth,—man's undying soul. Sin has been the means of separating it from its God, and of dooming it to eternal death. Death is sin's wages, which man receives both in his body and in his soul. The one must be shattered and broken up, and lie in ashes: the other, which cannot thus perish, must pass away into a dark eternity, to a gloomy prison house, where no pleasure can again visit it, or any voice of joy be ever heard. This death of body and soul has passed on all men, and is ready to be executed on them, because all have sinned.

I wish to direct your thoughts to the reality and nature and extent of that disorder of our souls, which, if unchecked and uncured, will lead to these fearful results. Few need to be stirred up to pay attention to a bodily disease, when it is likely to have fatal consequences. With what painful anxiety are the symptoms noted and watched; the mind knows no rest till they are removed or mitigated. But the disease preying on the soul is neither felt nor feared. Numbers

who confess weekly, "*We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us,*" neither believe nor experience what they say. There are not many applicants for the great Physician's aid and skill: not many pressing up to him to be healed of their spiritual diseases: for the whole need not a Physician, and few think or know that they are sick.

I. In speaking of the reality and nature of the soul's disease, I will *first* point out some of its *symptoms*. These symptoms are very easily and readily discovered if we look for them, and are not long in showing themselves, after a soul has begun to live in this world. Here is one which the Psalmist observed, "*As soon as they are born, they go astray, speaking lies.*" Look at children everywhere. Is it all innocence and purity in their young hearts? Which are they most quick and ready to learn, and drink in, and imitate,—evil or good? Which seems to come most natural to them—to be most in accordance with their dispositions? Do you ever expect them to learn and follow what is good, unless you take constant pains; or that they will be kept from evil, unless you continually watch and check them? To which would their own natural bent lead them? Solomon answers the question—"a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

Passing on to riper years, we see the symptoms which showed themselves in childhood, increasing if they have been left unchecked. There are three forms in which the soul's disease develops itself in every one. It assumes the form of a *stony heart*, an *earthly mind*, and a *rebellious will*. These symptoms of it, more or less palpable and aggravated, may be detected in every soul. It is of them that the soul is sick. The stony heart that refuses to listen to God's beseechings, and is unmoved by the sufferings and love of his Son—the earthly mind that can only relish earthly things, and can see nothing worthy of its affections in those above—the rebellious will, that finds the very charm of sin to consist in its being a forbidden thing;—these three fatal symptoms are universal:

there is not a soul born into the world free from them. The natural heart is hard and insensible as a stone: the natural mind is carnal, earthly, hostile to God, and happy without him: the natural will resists his authority, and refuses to obey him. By these symptoms, the poison within us shows itself: these are its workings. The malady of which the soul is sick is a real one: none have escaped it.

II. We will notice, *secondly*, some of its *features*. It is *deep-rooted*. We are apt to confound symptoms with the disease itself. We think ourselves sinners, merely because we have committed sin. The real truth is, that in committing sin we just bring out to view the inward guilt and corruption that God always saw in us, and which we now see ourselves. We are sinners by the depravity of our hearts: the commission of sin is just the outbreak of that depravity; the natural fruit of the cursed root within us. We can leave off particular sins, but we can never pluck out the root they spring from. Sinful acts may be shunned, but a sinful nature goes with a man all his life through.

It is *wide-spread*. Our spiritual disease is not confined to the will, or to the affections, or to the heart, but it infects them all. They are all perverted from their proper ends. When the body is thoroughly disordered the whole machinery goes wrong; none of its functions are properly performed. The soul's disorder is attended with like effects. The long dark list that St. Paul gives of the works of the flesh, (Gal. v. 19—21) is the result of it. These are not the proper actings of the soul. If it was in a healthy state, such fruits would not be seen in it. God made man upright: sin brought disorder with it: he has now no whole part in him.

It is also *incurable by man*. No human efforts to heal the soul have proved effectual. Many means have been tried; but nothing has been found sufficient of itself to make it really better. Education, increased knowledge, civilization, a form of religion, sacraments, have none of them proved adequate remedies: they have not healed the hurt of the soul: they have not

brought it back to God. It is just what the leprosy was; (Lev. xiii. xiv.) a deep-seated, wasting disease, beyond the skill of the physician to cure; having small beginnings;—a rising in the skin, a bright spot merely, first indicating the disorder, which would then spread over the body, and the leper was pronounced unclean. So the disease of our souls begins within. A slight thing first discovers it. Unchecked, it spreads rapidly: every principle of holiness is lost: its deadness to God proclaims his absence from it.

The leper had no place allowed him in the camp of Israel: he was driven forth beyond its borders. Imagine his forlorn and miserable condition there. Restless and sad he sits apart from his brethren, forbidden to come near them: his clothes are rent, and his head is bare; a wasting disease has fastened upon him; his doom has been pronounced by the priest; he is unclean: death must inevitably follow unless he can obtain a cure. What gloomy, distressing thoughts occupy his mind: all his hopes are set on being healed; on being restored to what he has lost. We do not wonder at him for this; we should feel the same in his place: life seems hardly bearable under such an affliction. Such a loathsome disease preying on our bodies would distress us beyond measure. How is it so few of us feel or care for the leprosy of our souls. Death would soon put an end to our miseries in the body; but it would only be an introduction to the torments of the soul; the beginning of anguish and trouble that will never end.

And it is about this we are so heedless. We are ready to purchase health of body at any price: but because we do not sensibly feel the hurt of our souls, we think in our blindness and folly that nothing is wrong there. Now the Bible says that disorder and disease are there. We ought to be friends with God, and we are his enemies; we ought to love his ways, and we hate them; we ought to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; instead of which we follow, and are led by them. Conscience and experience confirm the testimony of the Bible. They bear their witness to the fact that there is sickness in our souls.

nothing there is as it ought to be. Think of the desolate outcast leper, shunned by all his fellows; ponder over his wretchedness, study it well, and then say, is this a true picture of the natural state of my soul: what the leper was in the sight of his brethren in the camp of Israel, the same loathsome spectacle am I before God and his holy angels.

III. *Thirdly*, it behoves us to ask about the *cure* of this disease. Its existence is undeniable: and the leper shut out of the camp till his leprosy was gone, is a type of our souls shut out of heaven, and debarred an entrance to its mansions, till their sickness has been healed. If we could apprehend this, how anxious it would make us about a cure. If I die with my soul's disease unhealed, I can never enter into glory; I cannot be received there; I must remain without; the gates into the city are shut against me. But I need not be thus excluded; I may yet be made whole. God has provided a remedy, having looked and seen that there was none to help. *He* undertakes that which baffles all human skill. "*I will bring health and cure.*" His own Son comes down among us; the Physician sent to recover the lost health of our souls.

Let us look into the character and qualifications of the Saviour in this office of the Physician of souls.

He understands our disease. He showed how well he knew both its reality and its malignity when he said to Nicodemus, "*Ye must be born again.*" He knows all its symptoms, and every varied form of it, and he alone possesses an effectual remedy. Man often tries to cure himself, and thinks that by outward reformation of life he has effected it; this only shows how ignorant he is of the depth and extent of his disease: mistaking a change of habits for a change of heart. There is but one remedy, and one Physician who can apply it.

And, *he is ready to undertake the cure.* The divine Physician never refuses to exert his power. Multitudes used to flock round him when he passed through Galilee and Judea, bringing their sick, and maimed, and blind, and "*he healed them all.*" None were re-

fused this exercise of his power. How much more ready is he to cure the hurt of the soul. The recovery of its health was the object that brought him down from heaven. It was the sight of dying souls that moved him to leave his Father's glory, and by the sacrifice of himself restore their life.

And next, *he is certain of carrying through what he undertakes*. There are no contingencies in his treatment of spiritual diseases: it is never doubtful whether the soul he undertakes to heal shall be healed or not. He speaks, and it is done. "*I will, be thou clean.*"

Again, *he cures to the uttermost*. The healing process is long, as it respects overcoming the effects of the disease; and though its strength be gone, its infection remains, as long as life lasts: but never where the great Physician's skill has been applied, does the soul perish under its disorder. He never works a half cure. His labour is never in vain. "*Of those whom thou gavest me,*" to heal and to save, "*have I lost none.*"

We next enquire, *How does he effect the cure?* The medicine Christ uses for healing our souls, is the balm of his own blood, and the clean water of the grace of the Spirit. "*I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.*" "*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.*" This is the cure. These are the remedies. None but a divine hand can apply them. God alone possesses them. Nothing but blood, and no blood but Christ's, can put away the guilt that taints our souls. Nothing less than the breath of the Holy Ghost can renew our sinful natures, and restore our lost life, and vigour and health.

Such is the disease, brethren, we all labour under; such is the remedy, suited, and offered to us all. Jesus Christ is the Physician to whom we may all apply, who never turns an applicant away, who never fails to heal the soul committed to him; who is ready at hand, ever willing, ever welcoming; more ready to hear us, than we to pray to him. "*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.*" "*Before they call, I will*

answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." We can understand, then, the complaint uttered by God through the prophet Jeremiah,—"*Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no Physician there? Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?*" For, while the disease is universal,—while all are sick, few have found health and cure. Experience and observation tells us this. The number of regenerate souls that have washed in the fountain opened for sin, seems nowhere hardly to bear any proportion to those dead in trespasses and sins, who know nothing of the Physician, and feel no need of him.

And seeing this, God asks as *in astonishment*,—"Why?" Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why are they not recovered? There is one near them, walking among them, who can heal. Why have they not sought him? Do they not know that they are sick? Do they not feel the poison working in them? Angels and devils, alike astonished, echo the question—"Why?" They wonder at our infatuation—to have the offer of cure, and to reject it,—to have the means of health within reach, and to prefer perishing, to reaching out a hand for them.

God also asks, *in expostulation*, "Why?" *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? Turn ye at my reproof."* He pleads with us against such folly. "*Wherefore will ye spend money for that which is not meat, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?*" He would remonstrate with us for minding so eagerly things that will soon be nothing to us, and leaving, unheeded, a disorder that will be our eternal ruin. Why will you reject a Physician, who, without money or price, offers to bring you health? Do you know what you are doing? "*He that despised Moses' law perished;—of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy that hath trampled under foot the Son of God."*

He asks, *inquiringly*, "Why?" How is it that among these many sick there is no recovery? "*Why are so few healed, when the means are ample, and the*

offer free?" This is the reason: "*Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.*" The heart's love of sin, and enmity towards God explains it all.

I have now opened to you, in some measure, how our case stands. We are sick, God tells us so; and he knows us well. Our disease will end in misery and death. If it were less serious—no more than we imagine it to be—would a Physician have been sent from heaven to heal us? We are invited, one and all, without exception and without distinction to put our souls into his hands to be cured. The cure is gratuitous—freely given. The medicine is all powerful—it is sure to heal. The Physician is kind and gracious—no applicant is turned away. Why, then, is the health of any soul unrecovered?

All this shows very plainly, brethren, that while salvation is of the Lord, destruction is our own. If it comes on any one, it is because he sought it, chose it, would not avoid it. If the blessing of a healed soul was known, it would not be so much despised. God's people are troubled, tried, tempted; yet they are a happy people; because the hurt of their souls is cured. If you have ever recovered from a bodily disorder, you know the gladsome, hopeful feelings that attend it. So feels a soul that was once in the horrible pit of an unrenewed nature, and sunk deep in the miry clay of sinful habits, and has been brought out thence, revived, renewed, set free. God puts a new song into its mouth; and if you have never sung it,—even praise to your God; have never waited patiently on him till he bent down and inclined his ear, and heard your call for help, and sent his word and healed you; if you have had no dealings with the divine Physician for your recovery, the hurt of your souls, brethren, is on them still. You may have done many other things, but if you have not done *this*,—just laid your case before him,—pleading for a cleansed soul, and a new heart, health is still far from you.

And there is no time to be lost. For he who is now patient and long-suffering, stretching out his hands, knocking, and calling, will at last laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. What

must be the power and excellency of the divine Physician, when one right look at him obtains everlasting salvation, and effects what no human efforts or skill can compass,—the soul's health and cure. *"Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else."*

As when the Hebrew prophet raised
The brazen Serpent high,
The wounded looked, and straight were cured,
The people ceased to die :
So from the Saviour on the cross
A healing virtue flows ;
Who looks to him with lively faith
Is saved from endless woes.
Not to condemn the sons of men
The Son of God appeared ;
No weapons in his hand are seen,
Nor voice of terror heard :
He came to raise our fallen state,
And our lost hopes restore :
Faith leads us to the mercy seat,
And bids us fear no more.

No. 2.

THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

IF we may believe the world, the way to heaven is thronged by a multitude of travellers, who all expect to arrive there at their journey's end. If we believe the Bible, it is a narrow, unfrequented way, which no one selects of his own choice, or finds till a divine hand guides him into it.

Here are two testimonies directly contrary to each other, pointing out two different ways to the same place. God, in his word, describes the way to the kingdom as straight and difficult, the world holds it to be broad and easy. Which of the two will really lead us thither? How important to discover and travel in the right one. Imagine the consequences of a mistake in the journey of life; so irretrievable—so fatal! To be travelling all one's days in a wrong direction, and not to be aware of it either,—for the broad way of death is not so clear and palpable that no one can walk in it without knowing whither he is going. “*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, whose end are the ways of death.*” There can be no information of greater moment and interest to us, who are passing rapidly through this world, and never sure of another moment in it, than that which tells us the right way to heaven.

I. On this subject we must first notice the *difficulties there are in the way of a sinner's getting to heaven*. There are, in the first place, *his sins*; all his transgressions of the law; his various acts of disobedience; his neglect and omission of duty;—these, till he can get rid of them, will for ever keep him out of heaven. And though one man's sins should be fewer, and more trifling, as he may imagine them, than another's, this gives him no better chance. The law of God makes no distinction between transgressors. It decides

peremptorily, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die.*" Break one of the least of the commandments, and you perish. It gives no door of hope to any sinner. If you were chargeable with only one sin, it shuts you up to condemnation. It says nothing of escaping punishment by means of repentance, prayers, penances, or after obedience. The obedience of a whole life would not make satisfaction for a single transgression. How much less could we, by any thing in our power, atone for the incalculable number we have each been guilty of. "*Who can tell how oft he offendeth?*" He who is most aware of his guilt, very far under-rates it.

Here is a barrier, then, to our admission into the presence of God. He cannot look upon iniquity. It once manifested itself in heaven, and was directly expelled. The sinning angels were driven out to a place prepared for them. If they, with guilt upon them, could not remain in heaven, have we, with our sins, any hope of being admitted there?

Another hindrance is *our enmity to God*. One might think sin could be easily removed by an act of pardon,—God might forgive them for pity's sake, and take us to himself. But even if this could be, here is another difficulty:—with such hearts as ours, God, who knows them best, declares that every imagination of them is only evil continually,—that they are deceitful, and desperately wicked,—carnal, and enmity against him,—we would not keep God's law if we could. It is his prohibition of sin that makes us so eager to commit it. When the Israelites worshipped Moloch and Remphan, it was not because they had any special regard to those idols,—but God had said, "*Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them,*" and that was the very reason why they did so. Our corruption and depravity consists in this rebellious spirit, which animates every human heart. All the souls with which God has peopled the earth,—all the living beings his hands have made and fashioned, are his natural enemies. They would drive him, if they could, out of his own world. "*The fool hath said in his heart there is (let there be) no God.*" His in-

most wish is, I would there were none. We like to forget that God exists—to keep out of his sight—and to keep him out of our minds. We say, it would make us gloomy to think of him, and be much with him, or with his people. An unconverted man, it has been truly said, would rather spend half an hour in the tread-mill every morning, than go to meet God. What a barrier must this enmity and dislike be to our going to heaven—into the immediate presence of God. How could those, who so hate him in their hearts, dwell with him in peace?

One more hindrance is, our *love of unholiness*. This is the effect of the fall. Sin entered so thoroughly into us that our whole nature has become corrupted. We could not relish the pure enjoyments of angels. We have a taste for things very different from heavenly delights. We like what feeds our pride and gratifies our passions. It is whatsoever things are not "*honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report*" that we find pleasure in. Heaven, then, would be a strange place to us. What fellowship can there be between light and darkness?

Many think, however true these things may be of some, they do not relate to all: all have not such hostile feelings towards God, and such a love for unholiness. But the Bible makes no exceptions. All are shut up under sin; there is none that doeth good. God sees no difference among his creatures before his grace has come to them. He sees nothing holy, nothing pure, nothing good in the natural issue of any heart. Their desires and affections before renewal from above go out towards sin—never toward holiness. No one can ever say, "*I delight in the law of God after the inward man,*" till "*the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,*" has been formed in him. You remember the contrast in St. Paul's description of the works of the flesh, and the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 19—23). Is there any doubt which of them grow and abound in us;—do not their names explain it? It is the first that we love and prefer: they are the proper works of the flesh. The second never grow spontaneously in a

human heart. It is not a soil they can flourish in without previous preparation. They are the fruits of the Spirit.

II. Let us notice, next, *the mistakes that are made about the way of getting to heaven*. More than half the population of the world are utterly in ignorance of the right way. They are looking to dumb senseless idols for the help that cometh only from the Lord that made heaven and earth. And even the possession of a book sent from God to be a lamp to our feet, a sure guide to glory, is not a certain safeguard against mistakes. Numbers with the Bible in their hands, miss the way to heaven, and come short of everlasting life.

One very common error is, that it is *an easy thing to get to heaven*. This seems taken for granted. People who live for nothing but their own indulgence and worldly advantage,—who never deny themselves, and take up a cross if they can help it,—whose sole aim is to get and enjoy as much of this world as they can,—whose whole affections are occupied and bounded by it,—who find no enemies in their way,—who feel their sins no grief and burden,—how many such there are who are confidently reckoning they shall reach the kingdom, and are not to be persuaded there can be any danger for their souls. They think that to keep out of the direct way to hell, by abstaining from great sins, is to be in the direct way to heaven.

But “*thus saith the Lord,*” “*Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*” “*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence*” (is taken by force). “*What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.*” “*Him that overcometh shall sit down with me in my throne.*”

You have been thinking it an easy matter to get to heaven, that could be arranged in the last few months or days of life. See how differently the word of God describes it. It compares the journey to a race—a warfare—a pilgrimage. If yours is such a smooth and easy one,—if you are in pursuit of no prize to be

gained beyond the grave,—if you are battling with no invisible foes that are seeking to assault and hurt your soul,—if you do not count yourself a pilgrim and stranger in this mortal state,—is it not most likely that you have mistaken the right path, and are not on the road to heaven at all?

We do not take it so easily when we have some earthly advantage in prospect. We know that nothing is to be gained in this life without effort and trouble; and when it is some great thing our hearts are set upon, there is no labour, exertion, or self-denial, we will not encounter in pursuit of it. And when, after years of toil, you hold the prize in your hand, what is it worth? how much of life and health has been spent to gain it? how long will it last? or rather, how long can you keep it? Still, with all this uncertainty and insecurity, no one thinks his pains have been thrown away: what he has gained was worth the toil, and he knows it could never have been obtained without it. And yet he imagines that "*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away,*" may be secured without an effort! When it becomes easy to walk contrary to the course of this world, to overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh, then it will be an easy thing for a sinner to get to heaven.

Another mistake is, that it is *common* to get there. No one expects to go elsewhere after death. We believe in a hell for the wicked, but no one thinks it likely to be his own portion. Everybody expects to be saved—not lost;—to be happy—not miserable in eternity.

But "*thus saith the Lord,*" "*Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" "*Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*" "*Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" "*Many are called but few chosen.*"

The way to heaven is comparatively unfrequented. It is too straight and narrow to please our hearts. It is a hill of difficulty, up which it is no easy task for us, with sins so easily besetting us, to climb. Everything is against us: the heart, within, moving us to

turn back;—the devil, without, enticing us into pleasant looking by-paths, that seem a shorter and smoother road;—the travellers in it, apt to grow weary and faint, obliged to be ever looking up to their leader, with the cry, "*Hold thou us up.*" While the other way is so congenial to our natural dispositions,—so easy to enter, for the gate is wide;—so smooth to travel in, for the path is broad;—that no wonder "*many there be that go in thereat.*" Left to our own bent and inclination, we should all prefer it. The whole world would walk in the broad way; not a single solitary traveller would be seen in the other. Yet this much-frequented path leads to destruction. Can it be, then, a common thing—a matter of course—for sinners to get to heaven?

There are also mistakes we are liable to fall into, as to what is the way itself,—as to what must be done to get to heaven.

For instance, there is the mistake of *the moralist*. I mean by a moralist, one who supposes that a good character in the sight of men—leading an honest life—doing no harm—is a safe passport to eternal life. The world is full of moralists. How many think to themselves, as we mean well, and do well, and keep clear of gross sins,—why should we not be saved? What is to prevent our going to heaven? But is there any thing which God has ever spoken for such a thought to rest on? He does not recognize morality, blamelessness, integrity, as a title to glory. The Bible,—the book of directions how to get to heaven,—does not speak of this way, or give any hint that on such accounts as these, a soul can be saved. The grand mistake of such persons is, that they do not feel and realize themselves to be sinners. They know nothing of the state of their hearts before God, and that he has a controversy with them for rebellion, ingratitude and guilt. They suppose that they appear to him as they do to themselves, and little deserve to be numbered with, and punished as his enemies. Their moral lives and conduct constitute their religion,—their ground of confidence for the future. Being ignorant that they are by nature dead in sins, and alienated

from God, they are ignorant of his way of saving such. They think they shall be able to stand in the judgment, because they have the credit of a good heart and a well-conducted life among their fellow-men.

Are any of you, brethren, needing to be told to beware of this mistake? It seems a strange thing, that with such a light as there is shining in the Bible, and pointing out the real and only way to heaven, any with that Bible before them, should so go astray. Yet they are many who think that harmlessness, blamelessness, and integrity are the way; that these entitle them to the bliss of heaven. They will not believe their journey must end, as it surely will, in disappointment and death.

Again, there is the mistake of *the legalist*: that is, one who has great confidence in his works and duties, to save his soul; one whose feeling is, if I attend to religion, and keep the commandments, and do my best, God will save me for Christ's sake. Such a one, is not content with a mere moral life; he thinks the right way to heaven is to establish a claim to it by his own righteousness. He would be saved by the deeds of the law. He seeks to make his goodness outweigh his guilt.

What is the mistake of such persons? They mistake things that are *in* the way to heaven for *the* way itself. They suppose because sins will ruin the soul, that therefore good works will save it. Their duties, and endeavours to please God, their prayers and religious exercises are excellent in themselves; the error is in expecting to get to heaven *by* them; to be rewarded with its joys in return for their obedience. It is true that such persons speak of being saved by Christ: but it is as if Christ was to make it possible for God to save them for their own works' sake. Their reliance is more on what *they* have done than what *He* has done. They expect God will accept their imperfect obedience, and for that, and Christ's death together, deliver them from the curse. They suppose if they go on making themselves better and better, they will be certain to get to heaven at last.

And here, too, is a grievous mistake. This class, as well as the other, are ignorant of their corrupt nature, and the impossibility of doing any thing by themselves that can please God. Not knowing the cross of Christ, they have not been made wise unto salvation; or they would never dream, by merits of their own, to gain heaven. They know not the plague of their hearts,—their inbred corruption,—their actual guilt,—the nothingness, and worthlessness of their best deeds. They have gone in the way of Cain. Cain came as a creature to his Creator, bringing his offering of the fruits of the ground. God had no respect to it. He would not accept it. For Cain sought to place himself on a wrong footing with God. He wished to deal with Him as if God had no quarrel with him,—no sins to charge him with. He would not come as a sinner, who deserved punishment and needed pardon. He would not acknowledge that he had forfeited God's favour, and must be a debtor to his mercy, and therefore God would have none of his offering. If he had brought one like Abel's first,—had shown, as Abel did, by the sacrifice of a lamb, that he felt his need of blood to wash away his sins, before God could accept him and his, and then presented his offering of thankfulness, it would have been received.

Yet this way of Cain, which ought to be a warning, is, by many, taken as an example. They bring their offerings to God, their obedience, their prayers, their merits, and expect him to accept and reward them on their account. They do not feel the need of blood *first*;—of cleansing before God can look on them;—that their persons must be accepted in Christ, before any of their offerings can be acceptable. When they think of the day of account, their chief source of comfort is, what they have been, and what they have done. They have attended sacraments so frequently, been to church so constantly, read their Bibles and said their prayers so regularly, discharged all their duties to others so conscientiously;—if these things are not enough, they say,—if we, who have done them, do not enter heaven, who can expect to do so?

Is it not strange, again, when we have a lamp from

heaven to guide our feet, and a voice from God telling us that though these things are *in* the way to heaven, they are not the way itself, that so many should thus fatally mistake it? How manifold are the errors about it! One thinks, it is an easy thing to get to heaven; I need not take much trouble, at a more convenient season I will attend to it. Another comforts himself, that most people will get there, and his chance is as good as theirs. A third supposes that nothing more than morality and integrity of life and conduct are required as a title to everlasting life. A fourth that his merits and services have made it his lawful due. And what does God say, of all these thoughts? "*They are vanity and a work of errors; in the day of their visitation they shall perish.*"

III. We now come to inquire which is *the true way to heaven*. The first thing to notice about it is, that *God has devised it*. No man could find out or invent the way for himself. As long as his sins, and enmity, and corruption remained, he could not come near God. Adam, when he was driven out of Paradise, could not, try as he might, get back there. The flaming sword, turning every way, met him on all sides, and barred him out. When you have done every thing in your power;—gone through torture, penance, every means that seem likely to atone for sin, and propitiate God, still the guilt is not removed off your soul, and heaven is as far off as ever. How can man be just with God? How can he appear before his Maker as a righteous being; without sin, as an inhabitant of heaven must be? No one has ever been able to tell how; and it would have remained for ever an unanswered question—an impossibility—if God himself had not devised and shown us the way. And he has shown us how, without putting his Law aside, or mitigating in the least, the strictness of its penalty, he can spare and save the sinners that are under its curse. The penalty shall be paid; sin shall have its wages; yet heaven shall be opened to those who deserve hell. He will be both "*a just God and a Saviour.*"

This is the nature of the way God has devised for saving us. It is the way by which he is both just and

merciful. He punishes the sin; yet he spares the sinner. It is a way as old as eternity; a plan formed before the foundation of the world. The eternal Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as it were sat in council, and arranged the means for bringing dead, corrupt sinners into the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ opened it. It is sin that shuts us out of God's presence. It is a barrier we can neither cross nor break down. On account of it we are exiles from heaven. The sacrifice of the Son of God on the cross put away sin, that it should be a barrier and hindrance to us no longer. We may now go to God because his Son has been made sin for us; he has endured the curse for us; he has made satisfaction to God's broken Law for our sins. He saw us under condemnation; under a sentence of death. God gave us his Law to keep, and we broke it. His justice and truth demanded satisfaction. The sinner must die. Of what use is any thing we can do in such circumstances? How could a ruined sinner raise himself to glory and happiness? How could he escape the curse? We fancy we can devise some means of escaping it; and many think that with a little help they can get themselves to heaven: but God's thoughts are very different. "*He looked, and there was none to help; therefore his own arm brought salvation.*" He became himself the sinner's substitute. Jesus Christ came down and stood in the place of his people. The sword that would have destroyed them, smote him, and they were spared. He thus put away the guilt and condemnation of sin from every believer in his name. In him they are justified from all things; his sacrifice is so complete a satisfaction for sin, that they are taken into full favour, their guilt is imputed to him, and his righteousness to them. There is reconciliation, pardon, and eternal life offered freely to every sinner, without distinction, who believes in his name.

You will understand, that Jesus Christ came not to show us the way to heaven, but to be the way. How expressly and distinctly he declares it; "*I am the Way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" The way to heaven is not praying; it is not doing

good or being holy ; it is not forsaking sin and attending to duty : persons who are on the road to heaven mind all these things ; but the way itself is Jesus Christ. It is his blood that gets sinners to heaven. We have boldness to enter it by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way consecrated for us through the vail of his flesh. Here is a way specially prepared and set apart for our use in returning to God. Let me beware then of all by-paths,—all roads however specious they may seem and likely to lead me to glory,—if they are different from this blood-sprinkled way, by the slain Lamb. "*There are many devices in a man's heart,*" how to make his peace with God, and save his soul, and get to heaven, "*but the counsel of the Lord,*" that every sinner brought to glory shall enter it by this new and living way, "*it shall stand.*"

The Holy Ghost reveals it. He first teaches a sinner how utterly unable he is to save himself. He shows him his sad condition as a condemned criminal, convinces him of the dreadfulness of sin, and the fearfulness of wrath to come. Then he makes him feel that, do what he may, he cannot get rid of his guilt, or escape God's judgment ; fills him with alarm about his state and prospects. And when he has opened his eyes, and taught him the number of his sins, and made him tremble for their consequences, and set him upon looking about anxiously for a way of escape, then he takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to him. The Spirit shows him Jesus bearing sin on the cross in his own body, making full atonement for it there. He directs him to Jesus as a refuge in his distress. The sinner learns under his teaching that this Saviour is for him ; that these sufferings are instead of his ; that forgiveness flows freely to him from the Father for the sake of Christ. An effectual look at him, when he manifests himself, casts out fear, and gives the joy of salvation to his heart.

Great numbers see no particular suitableness and excellence in Christ as a Saviour for sinners. They are afraid to put full confidence in him. They do not feel persuaded he is the only way to the Father. This is because the Holy Ghost has not shown them Christ

as the way. The Bible will describe him to you in this character; it will tell you how free and suitable he is for every sinner in the most desperate condition; yet perhaps you have not found Christ there: he is not your way of getting to heaven. You think your own still the safest and surest. What you want is the light of the Spirit to shine on God's word, and show you how it testifies of Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It was for want of this light that the Jews could not discover him. Jesus told them that the Book which was their guide to heaven spoke of himself; "*Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.*" But no one becomes acquainted with Him of whom the Scriptures testify, till he is revealed by the Holy Ghost. We can never understand what the Bible means, till he teaches us. How is it so many who read it, and think they are learning by it how to get to heaven, have never set foot yet in the right way thither? Just because the Spirit has not shown them him who is "*the Way.*" And yet, for the asking, any one might have this divine teaching. "*If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him.*"

Thus, when Adam had lost the way to heaven for himself and his posterity, and sin stood as an impassable barrier between it and us, God opened a new and living way, by the blood and death of his Son. The simple truth about the matter is just this; Christ having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. No one can say, it was so hard a matter to know how to be saved, that I, being unlearned and ignorant, could never understand it. The thing that is of most consequence for a lost sinner to know, is the simplest and plainest thing that can be told him. Jesus Christ is the way to heaven, and every one who believes in him, gets there.

IV. I will next mention two reasons for using this way of going to heaven. One is, *you will never get there by any other.* Christ has told us this plainly

himself. "*No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" Notwithstanding this, how wilfully and perversely we try to come by some other way. One relies on his good works, another on his good character, a third on his good heart. Christ is to help them to save their souls. They are to divide the merit between themselves and him. Yet it would be difficult to make the division. How much of theirs would be enough? What amount of duty and service is required to get the benefit of Christ's death and merits? When may you stop? Has God said how much he requires, how much will suffice to establish your title to a place above? No; but he has closed up all paths to heaven except one: and he who is not content to enter it as a lost and guilty sinner who deserves to be in hell, may as well give up all hopes of it. "*By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified.*"

Some one says, perhaps; this way of going to heaven makes no account of all the good there is in us. Is there no merit in our sincere obedience, our good dispositions; all our prayers, our sacraments, our kind and charitable acts, our sabbath observance, our moral worth, are these to be reckoned worthy of no reward? If they all go for nothing, where is the use of them? We thought they would have stood us in good stead at the judgment; yet to be told, after trying all these ways to deserve salvation, that they are all worthless! The answer to these objections has been given a hundred times. Good works are ordained of God for us to walk in; they are the fruits of faith in Christ: but they will not make amends for a single sin, nor give to him whose life has been most full of them, a title to eternal life.—(Paul, you remember, was willing to let all *his* labours and services go for nothing, that he might win Christ, and be found in him)—Philip iii. 7, 8. If you had no sins to be forgiven, and were able to keep God's law perfectly, this way to heaven might do for you. But it is not the sinner's way. You must go in at the wicket gate, by him who is "*the door*," or the path you take will not lead you where you desire to be. The first step the sinner takes up the ladder which is between earth

and heaven, places him "*in Christ*." There are no good works, no obedience first, before he reaches Christ, to make him worthy of being received into favour. They are higher up the ladder. There is no acceptable obedience, no work really good, till you have come to Christ and are in him. God has ordained them, not as the means of reaching Christ, but for those who are already in Christ,—already pardoned and justified,—to walk in.

You may be well assured of this, brethren, that till you are in him, you are not on the very first step of that ladder. You are still, whatever else you have done, at the bottom of it, and as far from the kingdom of heaven as you ever were. The first step towards that kingdom is into Christ:—into a state of friendship and acceptance with God through him. The first right step towards heaven takes a sinner out of condemnation, bondage, and darkness, into light, and liberty, and safety. You do not begin to ascend the ladder, by which alone you can pass from earth to glory, till you have believed in the Son of God. There is no other way. You may be sure that is a wrong road, which does not first take you straight to Christ;—which he is not the door to enter by. People are apt to fear that too much is made of Christ's blood and righteousness, and of believing in him, and too little of their own doings and deservings. I counsel you, if you have such thoughts, to remember the man who built his house on the sand, Matt. vii. 26. If you would not see your hopes destroyed, and all you have trusted in and relied on laid in ruins, take care not to make an ark for the saving of your soul out of your own righteousness. "*Lead me to the rock that is higher than I*," is the prayer of a helpless sinner. It is Christ's work, not your own, that is able to give you boldness in the day of judgment.

The second reason for using this way is this, *that we are sure to get to heaven by it*. This is certain, because it is God's way. We are not left to try and find one out for ourselves. We are not obliged to guess which may be the right road,—to conjecture what we must do to be saved. Neither are there a

variety of paths leading to heaven, some to a higher, and others to a lower seat in the kingdom; out of which each may make his own choice. But the way is one: the same for all, without respect of persons or of sins. It has been made on purpose for us by God himself, who has determined that every one who believes in his Son's name, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. It is the only way by which sinners can be brought to heaven, because nothing but the death of Christ makes satisfaction for sin, nothing but his blood cleanses the soul from it. It is a sure way for those who travel in it; for, once in Christ, and numbered among his people, nothing separates us from his love; "*no one shall pluck them out of my hand.*" It is the way by which all his saints, from righteous Abel downwards, have travelled safely to glory. Numbers have already reached the kingdom, and numbers are now journeying on towards it. As soon as a sinner is in it, he is near heaven. There may be indeed a long weary pilgrimage laid out for him before he comes there, yet as soon as he has set foot in the way—as soon as he is in Christ—heaven is brought near to him; he has laid hold of eternal life. He may be far from death, but he is not far from heaven. The good land is before him. He is well out of the city of Destruction, and on the right road to immortality. God gives him his Spirit, as an earnest of the inheritance that is reserved for him. Christ has pledged himself, that he shall never perish. It is the Father's will and pleasure that he should be saved; "*that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.*"

There is joy in heaven among the angels of God when a sinner enters this way, because they know that soul will never be lost. No one dies who is in it. "*Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me shall never die.*" He has escaped everlasting death: and the death of the body becomes "*sleeping in Jesus.*" Through the gate of death he passes into his eternal home. How strange, that this safe and sure way meets with so little acceptance among the sinners for whom it has

been opened. One large class prefers the broad road in which they may fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind, though it leads down to the chambers of death, and another will go to heaven by a way of their own devising. They see not the bar before them;—God's holy Law that will have either perfect obedience or death. Ask for a sight of its terrors, a sense of the fearfulness of its curse, and then you will be glad to enter in by him who has turned it from us, by being made a curse himself, and tasted death for us in his own body on the cross. Whatever we may think of this way, there is one thing certain; "*the redeemed shall walk there.*" All that the Father has given to Christ shall come to him, and to heaven *by* him. He is the Way.

V. Let me next mention two characteristics of the way to heaven which every traveller in it becomes acquainted with.

(1.) *It is a rough way.* We are recommended to sit down and count the cost before we begin the journey, for there are dangers and difficulties that attend it up to the very gates of heaven. He who gets the crown, fights his way to it. These are the principal trials found there.

The Devil frequents it. Ever since the path to glory was opened for the return of sinners, now nearly six thousand years ago, the same Evil Spirit who first tempted man to fall from God, has been using all his efforts to prevent his recovery. The fallen angels cannot enter the way that has been prepared exclusively for fallen man. There is no open door for their return to the happiness they have lost. But God has given them liberty to roam to and fro over the earth; and the use they make of it is to try and keep sinners out of this way, and annoy and trouble them when they are in it. The falls of good men recorded in Scripture history, are the defeats they have met with in their encounters with the Devil. He is always on the watch; never losing an opportunity;—assaulting at the weakest point:—suiting his temptations to the characters he has to deal with. There is no pilgrim

to Zion that has not met with him. Every one in the right way to heaven knows something of what it is to be tempted of the Devil.

Yet though God has permitted this fierce and crafty enemy to frequent the path to his kingdom, he has made special provision for the travellers in it against his assaults. They are counselled to "*put on the whole armour of God that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.*" They are encouraged by the assurance, that "*he who himself suffered, being tempted, is able also to succour them that are tempted.*" But all this speaks of danger;—an enemy that is not to be trifled with. It warns the pilgrim of foes in his path, who will not let him pass smoothly and easily into the kingdom of God.

The Cross is found in it. Our Lord has laid down the law of the way thus:—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." He must walk even as Christ walked; and Christ "*pleased not himself.*" "*I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*" This is the pilgrim's motto. He puts his will in subjection to God's. It is not what pleases himself, but what pleases his Master, that he is to follow. The path of self-pleasing does not lead to heaven. It is an old saying, no cross, no crown. What a warning that rich man in the parable holds out to us. His life was without a cross. He fared sumptuously every day. And what was his latter end? He is a warning too, to every class. A poor man, as well as a rich one, may live equally forgetful of God, and be as unwilling to take up his cross and follow Christ in his poverty, as the other was in his abundance.

There are two things to remember about the crosses that are found in the way to heaven. *They are not to be murmured at.* The Israelites were repeatedly doing this in their passage to Canaan, and they only fared the worse for it. He who is walking in Christ, towards Christ, to be ever with Christ, should not repine at the hardness or length of the way he is led by. It is enough that he is going home. And all he may be required to suffer, is nothing in comparison of what

his Master suffered for him. "*The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his lord; it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master.*"

Again, *they are not to be avoided.* He who comes after Christ, is to *take up* his cross:—whatever of humiliation, or suffering, or trial, that may lie before him. He is not to shun it, lest in seeking a pleasanter and easier path he should get out of the right one. In some cases, there is a very hard cross to bear. It is hard to meet the ridicule and taunts of sinful companions; hard to be misrepresented and despised; hard to forego some worldly profit, and run the risk of losses, and of offending others, by refusing to break the Sabbath, and to keep a good conscience at all hazards. Yet these crosses must not be shunned because they are hard. "*He that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.*" "*He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.*"

The flesh dislikes it. Every one who is in the right way to heaven has got a new nature, but he has not lost his old one. The new man has been created in him, but the old man is still there. "*The flesh lusteth against the spirit.*" Long after Paul had become a changed man, and had learnt to delight in the law of God, looking into his own heart he said, "*I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.*" I have the mind to serve God; I love the purity and breadth of his law; I consent to it that it is good; but I feel another law within me—the flesh—the old nature—drawing me another way, urging me to sin. When I would do good, evil is present with me. The Apostle very fully describes in that seventh chapter of Romans, the unseen inward struggle that goes on in a believer's heart between his new and his old nature. There is not only his soul's deadly foe haunting his path; Satan has an ally within, a whole array of fleshly lusts ready to rise up and serve his purposes. And often has the pilgrim thought they were subdued and almost dead within him, till a time of temptation arrived, and they sprung up again to hinder him in his way. The Devil would never have

been so successful as he has in deceiving and obstructing those on the road to heaven, but for the corruptions within them. Paul felt this resistance of the flesh to the Spirit so strongly that he cried out, "*O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death.*"

Brethren, to feel this, is one sign of being in the right way to heaven. Where there is only the old nature in a man, it is peace. Conscience may at times give him uneasiness: but a sense of sin and opposition to God and to holiness does not disquiet him. He who is going to heaven feels that within him which pulls him back. He cannot get forward as he would. He often fears with such a heart as his he shall never get there. That is a good sign he is going in the right direction. No one travelling in the broad road to hell has such a conflict in his soul. How should he? It is a conflict between the Spirit and the flesh, the old man and the new; and he has not the Spirit. He is not a new creature. The strong man armed has possession of all who are in that way, and his goods are in peace.

These are the difficulties which beset the way through this world to heaven. When you have entered in by the door, and are in Christ by faith, this is the sort of path that lies before you. Spiritual enemies, Satan and his hosts, are lying in wait ready with their assaults and temptations when opportunity arrives. Each pilgrim has his own cross specially appointed for him, which he must take up. Each has a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, that will never cease troubling and hindering him till he is at the gates of glory. How different from that broad road, where all is smooth and easy,—no resisting,—no warfare, but doing one's own will and following one's own devices. The throng of travellers in it show its superior attractions to the human heart. Only then the end of it! If we will go down the stream unresistingly, will not fight—will not wrestle—whither will it carry us? The other path is straight and difficult, but where does it lead? Besides, we have

seen only one side of the picture, now let us look at the other.

(2.) *It is a pleasant way.* One grand device of the Devil is to throw a gloom over it—every delight must be given up—all joy renounced—when any one begins to think about getting to heaven. Doubtless the vanities and shadows that please the natural heart must be given up, and what the world calls pleasure must be renounced by those who seek the kingdom; but the Devil's lie is in persuading you that you will not only lose these, but gain no other's in their stead, by setting out towards it. It is true, also, that the real pleasures of the way appear very unattractive to those not in it, and they fancy the life led therein must be a very dismal and melancholy existence. So it will always seem, till you get in at the door; till you have come to Christ, and are in him.—You will begin to think differently then. You will understand how you came to suppose the way to heaven to be so dark and gloomy, because "*the natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned.*" You will see then, how wrong you were in your estimate; how much you misjudged in the matter. He who said, "*Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life,*" has said also, "*Her (wisdom's) ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*"

Peace is one of its pleasures. A sinner who is in Christ is reconciled to God. He walks under the guidance of God's eye, and in the enjoyment of his favour. The controversy God had with him for sin is settled, Christ has taken his sins, and he has got Christ's righteousness. He has been pardoned. He has access to the throne of grace where his Father sits. Whatever may happen to him in the course of his pilgrimage, he has this assurance, all things shall work together for his good.

Here is a pleasure to match with any the world affords. To have inward peace, a quiet conscience purged from dead works by Christ's blood,—to be able to think of the God who made heaven and earth as

your God, without alarm and disquietude in the thought,—is not this a real blessing? When a time of sickness, or outward trouble, or the hour of death comes on, you would feel its value.

Another thing that makes the way to heaven pleasant is, the provision made for the travellers in it. There is a promise with respect to temporal things, "*Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*" They are in the covenant: and God has pledged himself to provide them for his people. "*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.*" And for their souls, there is mercy to be found daily at the throne of grace for sins and shortcomings. There is grace to help in time of need; in store for use against the temptations of the Devil, and the indwelling sin of the heart. There are ministering spirits round about the heirs of salvation, bearing them up in their hands. And their Leader himself walks among them: they have his promise; "*Fear thou not, for I am with thee.*" "*I am with you always.*" There are days of sunshine for the travellers in the way to heaven; they have no wish to change their path. Though they often find it rough and hard, it has its pleasures which they could find no where else. They have enjoyments of their own: such as those David describes in the twenty-third Psalm:

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green, he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

VI. I will add, in conclusion, two words of counsel.

(1.) *Make it the first thing to get to heaven.* "*What will it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*" What comfort could it be to remember in hell the good things that were enjoyed on earth when they have been all left behind there? When Abraham said to the rich man in torment, "*Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivest thy good things,*" would the recollection give him any pleasure;—would he think *there* his life had been

well and wisely spent? Consider, what you are making a business of; what you are minding with all your heart and soul. The time and thoughts of most persons are of necessity much taken up with their worldly occupations and employments. Yet it is no reason why the care of the soul should be neglected or put off. A lawful calling need be no hindrance to any one making his way to heaven, and minding the things of it. Who ever had a greater press of worldly business upon him, and more to fill his thoughts, than Daniel, the prime minister of a great empire? Yet he found time to worship his God three times a day, and to mind things above, while he necessarily had to do so much with the things of the earth.

What a common excuse it is, if I had more time,—not so many burdens upon me,—not so much to think of,—I could attend to my soul. The Devil suggests this excuse; and the heart readily takes it up, because it dislikes the way to heaven and all its accompaniments. But like all Satan's suggestions, it is a lie. Till a man has another heart given him, he would not be the least more inclined to walk in the way of God's commandments, if he had the whole of his time at his disposal. You would not find yourself more ready to set out for heaven, if you were placed in a desert, with nothing to do, than with a multitude of family cares, or engrossing worldly business, filling your thoughts.

He who would get to heaven, must, in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him, make it his first business. It must be your ruling desire; your chief aim; your one thing needful.

(2.) *Go to the Bible to learn the way to heaven.* Do not ask the world which is the way. It is an unsafe guide. Do not think theirs is the way: remember which of the two paths the world prefers. Its judgment and opinions as to what must be done to get to heaven are worse than worthless,—they are dangerous delusions,—ending in fearful disappointment and ruin. For they are not formed on the Word of God, which alone is able to tell us any thing about the matter. It says that the world is entirely wrong: that few seek and few find the right road. It does not say

that God has hidden it, or hedged it up, for his voice is ever heard calling "*Look unto me and be saved;*" "*Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*" But a way in which the flesh must be mortified, and sin resisted, is so uncongenial to our hearts, that the narrow way is sought and found by none till God has first sought them out, and guided their feet into it. The world says, that if a man pays attention to religion in its proper place, and maintains a good character, he need have no fears for the future. It would have you believe that with these things you are in the way to heaven. The Bible declares that "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"

It is *no trifle* to mistake the way to heaven; and yet it is a very easy thing to do so. Do you remember Ignorance in the Pilgrim's Progress; how well satisfied he was, and certain of being in the right way, though he had no sense of sin, and set little value on a Saviour? His mistake lasted all his life through. It was not till he knocked at the gates of heaven, when, instead of being admitted, he was conducted to the door that opened upon the bottomless pit, that he discovered his error. It is to be feared his is no uncommon case. Christ says there are many who will say to him Lord, Lord, expecting a place in heaven, to whom he will reply, "*I never knew you.*" Christ knows only those who are in himself—his living members—those who have his Spirit. How essential to know the real way, and not what merely seems to be the way to heaven! To miss it, makes all the difference between heaven and hell—the soul saved or lost—for eternity.

And it is *inexcusable* to mistake the way. The Bible declares it. The Holy Ghost is promised to reveal it. Christ is himself the Way, and he is free to all. No one ever lost heaven, who was in earnest seeking it, because he could not find the way. It is found of those that seek it. It is only because few seek that few find. Is, then, the way I am walking in, the way to heaven? Will it lead me to the kingdom? Not if it is after the course of this world, if it is a

thronged and beaten path:—not if I have found no cross to take up in it, no enemy obstructing my progress:—not if the pleasures of this world garnish and sweeten it:—~~not~~ if my heart, of its own bent and inclination has chosen it. But if I have burst the bonds of darkness, unbelief, and sin;—if God has given me the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of his Son, and I have fled to him for refuge, and come under the shadow of his wings;—if I love that way of salvation which gives him all the glory, and thirst for personal holiness and the forming of his image and likeness in the soul,—if these are the things that mark the way you take, then, doubtless, you have been led into that safe, though unfrequented path, which has glory and immortality at the end of it.

Give me the wings of faith to rise
 Within the veil, and see
 The saints above, how great their joys.
 How bright their glories be.

Once they were mourners here below,
 And pour'd out cries and tears;
 And wrestled hard, as we do now,
 With sins, and doubts, and fears.

I ask them whence their victory came;
 They, with united breath,
 Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
 Their triumph to his death.

They mark'd the footsteps that he trod,
 His zeal inspired their breast;
 And following their incarnate God,
 Possess the promised rest.

Our glorious Leader claims our praise
 For his own pattern given;
 While the long cloud of witnesses,
 Show the same path to heaven.

The following Works by DR. GRAHAM, may be had from the Publishers.

Just published, price 10s. bound in cloth.

HINTS FOR YOUNG MOTHERS, on the MANAGEMENT and DISORDERS of INFANCY and CHILDHOOD. Embracing the whole subject from Birth, with Directions to Mothers for the Management of themselves during Pregnancy and Lying-in, and also approved Prescriptions for Children's Complaints, &c.

"Written in a clear and interesting manner, and the author displays, as in his previous works, much judgment."—*Medical Circular*, 23d November.

"Information of the utmost value to mothers."—*Britannia*.

"Here are those broad principles and rules, the adoption of which by parents will materially conduce to the health and happiness of their children in after years."—*Witness*.

By the same Author, Eleventh Edition, with additions, price 16s.

2. MODERN DOMESTIC MEDICINE. A comprehensive Medical Guide for the Clergy, Families, and Emigrants.

"Of all the medical guides that have come to our hands, this is by far the best. For fulness and completeness they all yield the palm to Dr. Graham's."—*Banner*, Aug. 1853.

Also, by the same Author, in 8vo. price 11s. Fifth Edition, with Engravings.

3. ON THE DISEASES OF FEMALES; a Treatise illustrating their Symptoms, Causes, Varieties, and Treatment. With numerous Cases, and a Medical Glossary.

"It contains a mass of information indispensable to those for whom it is intended, and surpasses in value any other book of its character."—*Blackwood's Lady's Magazine*.

Also by the same Author.

4. ON PREACHING AND ON POPULAR EDUCATION: the First Part being a call on our Clergy and other Ministers of Christ to preach more fully and searchingly on the preceptive and practical parts of Christianity; the Second, being a Reply to the Rev. F. Close on Popular Education.

London. Published by Simpkin, Marshall and Co., Stationers' Court; and J. Hatchard, Piccadilly. Sold by all Booksellers.

